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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

THE ROBBER.

CHAPTER I.

SOON after the Emperor Charles the Fifth resigned his power into the hands of his son Philip the Second, King of Spain, the latter sovereign appointed Margaret, Duchess of Parma and Plaisance, to the government of Flanders, a country in which, according to Strada, the Jesuit (an historian of those times), " Mars has placed his throne and the seat of his empire." From thence the belligerent god is quaintly said to make occasional excursions merely into other countries, distributing wars among them

en passant ; but ever to return home to his favourite Low Countries, or Netherlands, for the full enjoyment of his too celebrated propensities. Certain it is, that no spot in Europe has been the *arena* of so many scenes of long protracted strife, from the revolt, and long and doubtful war consequent upon it, against the Romans, in the reigns of Tiberius and Vespasian, to the recent furious encounters between the Belgians and the Dutch.

At the time our narrative commences, however, there was no open war in the land, though feuds were multiplying, and parties were increasing in numbers, boldness, and inveteracy. A deadly hatred was that with which the people viewed the Spanish troops yet remaining in the country. There was a rumour, likewise, that the Inquisition was about to be established ; and, as the doctrines of Luther and Calvin had been embraced and openly avowed by a considerable number of individuals of all ranks in society, the mere name of that tribunal was calculated

to excite alarm. There were other and more intricate causes for discontent, which soon after led to a long and bloody war, the progress of which is inscribed on the pages of history, and forms no part of our present task, which is merely to relate a simple tale, noticing historical events briefly, and merely when necessary in our course.

The castle or fortress of St. Antoine, called by the country people Fort Santon, stood upon the summit of a rocky elevation on the banks of the river Meuse, not many leagues distant from the city of Liege. There are few rivers which can compete with the Meuse in the picturesque and romantic beauty of its course; and there are few parts of the Meuse's banks which may bear a comparison with the immediate vicinity of Fort Santon, for wildness of scenery and boldness of outline. The perpendicular or beetling rocks are fantastically tangled with a profusion of ivy, while the less precipitous hills are clothed to their summits with pine and other

hardy trees, which form a part of the well-known forest of Ardennes.

Gerard Laret, or Van Laret, as he had latterly thought fit to style himself, was the possessor of the chateau; but by what tenure he held it, was a mystery to all, save, as people said, to the Prince Bishop of Liege, who was not likely to be interrogated on the subject. All that was known was, that the former proprietor went away into "foreign parts," and had been missing about seven years, when Gerard Van Laret made his appearance one morning with about a score of armed followers; and, without saying with your leave or by your leave, sat himself down in the master's seat in the great hall, where his men followed, as soon as they had provided for the entertainment of their horses. They were bluff, sturdy-looking fellows, and each brought in with him a small cask of wine, or spirits, and a basket, containing something more substantial; and so it happened on that night there was more noise in the

castle than had been heard for the whole seven years preceding. The next morning, however, somewhat like order was restored, and the new master commanded that strict search should be made for the old housekeeper, who was at length found, muttering her prayers in an oratory, formed in the massy wall of a half-ruined tower, whither she had fled and hid herself, for fear of, as she said, she didn't know what.

Gertrude Bhlum was a little shrivelled old woman, with one eye, and about half a dozen teeth, the latter so scattered about her mouth as to be neither useful nor ornamental. Indeed it is a question whether they were not the cause of certain peculiarities in her mode of speaking, inasmuch as she was frequently wont to aver that she once had a very fine voice, and could sing beautifully, two facts which no one would have guessed from her usual tones. Supported, or rather carried, between two of the intruders, the poor body was literally brought into the presence of their master, all in a bundle, and

deposited upon a bench, having apparently lost, for a time, the use of her limbs; not, as she afterwards said, through fear, but in consequence of kneeling too long. As her tongue was the most necessary member under existing circumstances, it was, very fortunately, the first to recover its wonted faculties; and she answered divers questions put to her by the new comer very pertinently, and others, as he thought, very impertinently. But he seemed unwilling to take notice of the latter; upon which Mrs. Bhlum waxed bolder, and infused a spice more pertness into each succeeding reply, until Monsieur Van Laret told her that she seemed to forget who she was talking to.

“That’s impossible!” she exclaimed; “for I never knew; but I *should* like to know, for I don’t see what business any body has to come into another person’s castle, and terrify a body all sorts of ways, and particularly a lone woman, not I, as I was all the last blessed night, with a *hullabaloo*; I should like to know why?”

—I a'nt sure if my poor dear master, rest his soul! whether he be alive or dead, was to come to know of it——”

“Take her away!” cried Laret; and for the first time a fierce scowl passed over his countenance. “Away with her;” and immediately the old woman was caught up and carried off in the same style as she had been brought in; but her bearers, instead of taking her back to the scene of her devotions, put her down in the kitchen, by the side of a blazing fire, about which several men were engaged in preparing a substantial meal. The warmth of the flame comforted her old bones, and the exhalations around were tantalizing beyond measure to one who had lived for seven years on board wages, the payment of which even was uncertain. Therefore she looked upon the fire complacently, reflecting, that although the wood belonged to her old master, it was an article which cost very little in the forest of Ardennes; and she inhaled the fumes with a clear conscience, as proceeding

from viands which cost him nothing. So, after ruminating awhile on her singular condition, and the impossibility of turning so many men out of the castle by the prowess of her single arm, she resolved to temporize and enact the amiable, having her eye, mayhap, dwelling upon the loaves and fishes, which were scattered around in all directions. Her offers of service in the culinary department were accepted with right good will; and the immediate consequence was, the presentation of a dram, by a swaggering bully, who swore it would make her feel quite young again. Whether it had that effect, or that the novelty of bustle and plenty excited her, she moved about with uncommon alacrity, and it was a strange sight to behold her taking the command of half a dozen men, and threading her way between them, in all the mystery and dignity of pots, kettles, and pans. Nothing could exceed her surprise, when Hugo, the gamekeeper, made his appearance, heavily laden with hares,

pheasants, and partridges, which he threw upon the floor, and proceeded to wipe his brow with the sleeve of his jacket, a sure indication that a drop of something would be acceptable. But where that drop was to be had, old Gertrude knew not; so she gazed at Hugo, and Hugo stared at her and her assistants, and both were bewildered: but Mrs. Bhlum found utterance first, and asked where those things came from, and who they were for?

"They came off our own ground," replied Hugo, "and I was ordered to bring them here for the new master."

"Oho! ha! hem!" said Mrs. Bhlum, wishing to appear to know all about the matter. "Aye; it's all right, good Hugo;" and then, turning to her companions, she exclaimed, "come, some of you, give the gamekeeper something to drink, I'm sure he deserves it. I never saw finer birds in my life."

"Well said, old girl!" cried the swaggering fellow before mentioned; "marry, and I shall.

Come, my lad, prepare your mouth for such a taste as it never had before; open the top of your neck to receive—there—there—down with it! don't make wry faces! How do you like it?"

While these matters were in operation among the inferior part of the household, Gerard Van Laret employed himself in taking a survey of the castle, the general state of which afforded him great satisfaction, as the dilapidations were chiefly confined to the interior; and the outworks were as strong and formidable as stone walls and rocky precipices could render them. It was protected by the latter on three sides; on the fourth, stood the entrance tower, commanding a steep ascent from the valley below, and protected by a double fosse, with drawbridges, and at a short distance by a deep ravine, over which a narrow stone bridge was thrown. A stronger little fortress could scarcely be imagined, in times, when the circumstance of being commanded by adjacent hills was of no moment.

The invention of gunpowder was a woful enemy to such fastnesses and their owners, who felt it extremely difficult to admire the picturesque beauty of their ruins.

Laret was well pleased with his morning walk, and returned to the hall with an excellent appetite for his dinner, which was served up at the accustomed hour of noon, in a style very superior to his expectations. His gratification at this was evident and excessive, particularly when told that the old woman had presided over the important preparations; for he had certain cogent reasons for wishing to be on good terms with Mrs. Bhlum, to say nothing of his habitual love of good cheer. When, therefore, the repast was ended, he sent for her, and, after bestowing praise upon her arrangements, astonished and delighted her amazingly, by the payment of twenty florins, as part of the wages due to her from her late master.

“ They are your own, my good Gertrude,” said he; “ therefore, you need not thank me.

Mr. Sigel, the lawyer, will calculate the rest, and when he comes I'll pay it to you."

"But where's my old master?" cried Mrs. Bhlum; "an't he coming here again?"

"Humph!" replied Laret; "that's a doubtful case. However, if he should, there will be no difficulty in the matter between him and me; for I made that proviso when I—hem!—bought the estate. So, the long and short of the matter is, that I am master here now, and that's enough. However, as you are a clever, sensible woman, I should recommend you to say as little as possible about your late master, or, perhaps, you may get yourself into trouble. There are many parties, you know, about the country, and strange notions have got into many people's heads about the government and religion, and what not; but, as you're a shrewd, reasonable person, I dare say you'll take care to keep yourself clear of any suspicion. In these times 'the least said is the soonest mended,' particularly if the Court of Inquisition—"

"Oh, holy Maria!" cried Mrs. Bhlum, "I see how it is now! I thought what it would all come to when the young Count learned to read and write, as they call it. There's never no good comes of such ways, except for monks and friars, who shut themselves up with prayers and holy water, and relics, so that the evil one can't come at 'em; but the Count used to be poring over a book anywhere, with no kind of guard about him. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I see it all! And so he's turned heretic?"

"I didn't say that," observed Laret, gravely; "time will show—time will show. In the mean while, as I can't tell particulars, I think the wisest plan is not to say any thing; and I recommend you to do the same, particularly if you wish to remain here as housekeeper, with every thing under your own management, and an increase of wages in proportion to the responsibility of your office."

Gertrude's conduct in the kitchen having previously evinced that she understood the im-

portant art of "trimming," according to existing circumstances, it cannot appear extraordinary that she fell into the same way of thinking with the new master, particularly as the place of housekeeper in the castle of Santon was one that was not likely "to go a-begging." So she made several curtsies, and told his "Mightiness" that she hoped she should give him satisfaction; and his Mightiness waved his hand and nodded his head, and endeavoured to look complacently, till she disappeared, when he called her an old fool, and wished she might tumble down stairs and break her neck; but concluded by shrugging his shoulders and observing, that such as she was, since he *must* keep her, he would endeavour to turn her services to the best account.

Why villains, in general, are described as men of dark complexions, we have ever been at a loss to conceive, since our own experience and observation induce us to believe that there are good and bad of almost every tint. Be that as

it may, Van Laret was of a light colour, not altogether pale, as the sun and wind had been playing with his face somewhat rudely for nearly half a century. His head had a squarish sort of look, and so had his shoulders. He was about six feet high, stoutly, but awkwardly built, as if rather meant to fight where he stood, than to be engaged in pursuit, or driven to flight; and altogether, appeared, in manner and aspect, like a man who was very fond of having his own way, and, moreover, who *would* have it, if it were possible. Such was his person; and what his mind was, must be judged by the sequel. We hint only at one passion—an exceeding love of money—by some old-fashioned moralists called a vice, and said to be “the root of all evil.”

Some weeks passed away, after his arrival at the castle, in busy preparation, as if for some persons of more consequence than any then within its walls. Old Gertrude threw out many hints to her master, and asked many questions

of her companions, but all in vain; as the former would not, and the latter could not, tell her who were expected; all they knew was, that their master was a widower. All this was very perplexing; few things provoked Mrs. Bhlum more than to know there was a secret, and yet to perceive that it was past finding out. Her thoughts, however, were soon diverted into another course, by the arrival of an ancient man, with silver locks, pale countenance, dark, bright, and almost fierce-looking eyes; but, for the rest, bent with age, meagre, skinny, and shrivelled, like herself. This individual had a long interview with Van Laret, and was then formally announced to her as Gaspar Momper, the future steward, or bailiff of the estate. Towards him, therefore, Mrs. Bhlum most assiduously made her approaches, as to one more fitting to be her companion than the roistering sort of people with whom she had latterly been compelled to associate. A room was appointed for him, in a tower which overhung an almost perpendicular

rock, commanding a view of the ravine bridge, and the only avenue to the castle. There he had books and writing materials, and would seclude himself during the greater part of the day ; but, after the hour of twilight, Mrs. Bhlum seemed ever to be a welcome guest, and he would sit and listen to her long stories of bye-gone times as quietly as a child, though a stranger might have perceived a trace of humour or derision in the curl of his mouth, or the expression of his half-closed eyes. Mrs. Bhlum perceived neither, it being her almost invariable custom, when telling a favourite story, to fix her eye steadily upon the fire, as though it had been a book in which the whole matter was written.

The existence of two such important personages as a steward and a housekeeper, in one mansion, implies a regular set of gradations downward, to the scullion and stable-boy ; and such was established, by degrees, in the castle of Santon ; but, as the various fortunate indivi-

duals who obtained the several appointments were "every-day sort of people," it will be needless to say more than that there they were, and altogether formed a very imposing sort of establishment. Nobody would have imagined that Van Laret wanted half the number of attendants; and yet, he seemed particularly anxious that all things should be done regularly and in order, and with a strict adherence to etiquette, even when he took his meals alone or merely in the company of Gaspar Momper, whom he not unfrequently condescended to invite.

Every thing tended to perplex poor Mrs. Bhlum. She said that her new master was certainly much more of a real gentleman than she had at first supposed him, and, no doubt had caught his roughness of manner in the wars, which turned every body and every thing topsy-turvy; but then it was very odd that he should have the steward to dine with him alone. If he had kept up the old long table in the

baronial hall it would have been a different matter; for then any body might have made one. She ventured to hint as much to Momper, who told her hastily that there was more of an equality between Van Laret and himself than she might imagine; and then, as though fearful that he had said too much, added, "The fact is this, Mrs. Bhlum, I was not always what I seem now. I have seen better days; and between you and me, our master has seen worse, so—but strange alterations take place in the course of years. I little thought at one time of ever being his steward."

"Ah, well, I always thought so," replied Mrs. Blhum; "from the first time I saw you, thinks I, there's something above the common in that there man. And I'm of a good family too, I assure you, and was reckoned very handsome once, though I say it as shouldn't say it."

"No doubt, no doubt," observed Momper.

"And my grandfather," she continued, "was a sort of commander of some sort. I don't

know what they call it, not I, because I don't understand soldiering matters; but I know he went to the wars somewhere, a long way off, to fight against somebody, and never came back no more; and so no doubt he met what they call an honourable death, but, as I calls it, an untimely end."

"Hanged, most likely!" said Momper. "They were very fond of hanging in those days."

"You don't mean that!" cried Mrs. Bhlum; "the Virgin forbid! You didn't know him, did you? Poor soul! He'd never rest still in his grave if they served him that way."

"Humph!" said Momper. "Did you ever see him?"

"Why, I can't say as I ever did to know him again; for it is a great many years ago since he went away. I just remember he was a very great man, as big as our master, and something like him; but I was *quite* a child then. Oh dear; how time passes."

"Humph!" quoth Momper, "It's very strange! Wasn't his name the same as your's?"

"Yes," replied Gertrude. "Peter Bhlum, and the only one of that name in our family; for my father was called Aminadab, and poor little Peter, my brother, who was christened after his grandfather, because we all expected he would come back some day a great man, died of the measles, and I caught 'em too, though I was grown up, as a body may say, for I had a sweetheart, and that's the way I lost my eye."

"Well, well, that's all past and gone," said Momper. "But for the matter of your grandfather, I shouldn't wonder if you were to hear something about him before long, and perhaps see him too."

"See him!" exclaimed Mrs. Bhlum, "why, if he be alive, he must be a hundred and twenty or thirty years old, at least."

"I didn't say he was alive," observed Mom-

per, in a solemn tone. "But you can't have lived all these years in the world without knowing that people are very often seen after their death, particularly if they have met with a violent end, or are denied Christian burial."

"Mercy upon us!" cried poor Gertrude, "what do you mean? Who says he was hanged? I don't believe a word of it."

"Don't make too light of these things," continued Momper, with much solemnity. "I can't speak positively—it is a mysterious piece of business—but—I really think that *was* the name, Peter Bhlum—I'm almost sure of it. Let me ask you now seriously, did you never hear any strange noises about the castle?"

"Yes, a pretty many," was the reply, "and queer sights enough too; I've fancied sometimes, when it was neither light nor dark, and sometimes in the dark too—but I always downed upon my knees, said my paternoster and my avemaria, and so defied the whole toto of 'em."

"Aye, aye, I see how it is," said Momper, "and so you drove the poor old gentleman away; for your unburied people can't bear to hear that which they are not allowed to do themselves; and so that accounts for his coming to me."

"Coming to you!" shrieked Mrs. Bhlum, "you frighten one to death! What can you mean?"

"If it comes to me again, I shall send it to you, that's all," replied Momper, demurely; "for though I've a great respect for you, Mrs. Bhlum, I won't be plagued by other people's dead grandfathers; so it isn't worth while to say anything more about the matter. Time will show, and we shall see how it will end."

It was all in vain that the poor old woman urged him to relate further particulars; he declared that he feared he had already said too much, and that, when such sort of things were wandering about, it was the wisest way to keep a close tongue in one's head; for nobody knew

what kind of company they were in, even when they fancied themselves alone.

Mrs. Bhlum had but little sleep the night after this conversation; and when she did forget herself, very naturally dreamt of her grandfather; but, after two or three days had passed without his appearing, she began to think that Momper had been either dreaming or was not quite right in his intellects. The latter opinion seemed to be borne out by the extraordinary change in his habits; for, instead of sitting alone, as before, all the morning, he was now constantly on horseback, riding out of the castle, as if determined to break his neck, and returning, after five or six hours' absence, with his steed panting and covered with foam. Sometimes she felt convinced that he was a kind of sorcerer, for there was a something almost unearthly in the appearance of an old man, with white flowing hair, galloping thus madly through the forest, not only without fatigue, but seemingly with spirits invigorated by the exercise.

"There's something in the wind," was the only reply she could obtain from the bluff, soldier-like looking men, who had accompanied Van Laret when he first arrived at the castle, and who had remained there ever since, loitering about, and amusing themselves in any way they pleased, provided that they made their appearance once a day in the great hall, when Van Laret would sometimes go with them into the forest, and be absent for an hour or two.

It was midnight, and the clouds were chasing one another merrily beneath the cresset moon, and the wind was howling away most inharmoniously through the forest, and round every tower and angle of Fort Santon, when Mrs. Bhlum was startled from her slumbers by the sound of a horn, which she recognized as proceeding from the barbican or entrance tower. "Mercy upon us! What can it be?" she cried; but there was nobody to answer the question, and so she slid out of bed and groped

her way to her little casement window (from which she could peep into the principal court), and stood shaking and listening for some minutes, during which all remained silent, and the clouds began spitefully to fold over each other, and darken the scene before her to such a degree as to allow her barely to discern the outlines of the well-known buildings around. Why she looked that way is uncertain, for it was her blind side; but she did turn towards Momper's tower, and beheld a huge blue flame flickering from the summit. She would have screamed if she could, but her tongue seemed to cling to the roof of her mouth, and she remained gazing at the phenomenon, which dwindled quickly to a quivering point, and then expired. Shortly afterwards there arose a confused murmur of people talking, and the sound of horses' feet upon the pavement; but they both soon died away—all was again silent—nothing was to be seen; and so, after listening till her whole frame trembled as much from the effect of the cold

night wind as from apprehension, she was glad to creep back for refuge to her bed.

The next morning all appeared as usual in the castle—no one seemed to have arrived—every body went about their business or amusement as heretofore, without referring to or hinting at any event having occurred during the preceding night. Mrs. Bhlum was sadly at a loss, but felt it beneath her dignity to inquire of her inferiors for information on a subject respecting which she ought rather to have been able to inform them. It was a difficult task, but she, nevertheless, continued to bridle her tongue till the afternoon, when Momper anticipated any questions she might be disposed to ask by hoping that the arrival of a messenger, on urgent business from the Prince Bishop to their master, had not disturbed her slumbers. This kind inquiry was answered by a torrent of words. "A messenger! I'm sure I heard a dozen horses at least! What was it about? Why didn't you call me? How long did they stay?"

My old master would never have sent the Prince Bishop's servants away fasting! and they wouldn't have gone if he had. It's a disgrace to good housekeeping, that it is! &c., &c.;" and she concluded by asking, "But pray, master steward, what might be the meaning of that light over your tower? It didn't look like any thing I ever saw before."

Without any breach of trust, Momper could have told her that the light was merely to serve as a beacon to men who might otherwise have mistaken their road through the forest by night, but he rather thought fit to appear totally ignorant of her meaning, and thereby perplexed the poor old creature excessively, insomuch that, at length, after repeated asseverations on his part that it was impossible any light could have appeared in the situation described, she began to doubt the evidence of her senses, and to imagine that the flame might have been the creation of her own apprehensions.

That evening Van Laret and Momper were

closetted together in secret conference. "We must get rid of her somehow," said the master. "It is scarcely an hour since the old beldam was prowling about by the south-west tower, and asking why the entrance-door had been built up by the masons to-day. Hang her!"

"I wish we could hang her," replied the steward, "but, as she may be called the only representative of the St. Antoine family, the bishop will not hear of her dismissal; and, besides, the lawyers say that as long as she is retained, our holding possession of the castle is not an unjust seizure, but, on the contrary, a proper interference for the preservation of the estate for the benefit of the next heir, whenever he can claim it, and make his title good."

"Aye, aye," said Van Laret, "the lawyers! That's always their way. Keeping one between hawk and buzzard. Sigel will make a pretty penny out of the thing, I'll be bound for it, with his indemnifications and dilapidations, and ifs and ands. The estate should have been de-

clared confiscated at once; and then let them get it back if they could."

"As matters are, you see, sir," observed Momper, speaking in a business-like manner, "the old woman being left in charge of the property, as long as she is not turned out——well, well, you know the rest, I won't waste time in repetition... Mark! All's right, as long as she is not *turned out*; but——"

"Aye, aye! I see!" exclaimed Van Laret, while his eyes glistened with savage delight, "If the old hag should *happen* to slip her wind some day, you know there would be nobody left to take charge of the estate. Take charge of the estate! Capital! By St. Anthony, who took the old one by the nose! Momper, you're a clever fellow. Let me see—I've got a bottle or two of the old Johannisberg in a snug corner that my fellows know nothing about; so I must go myself. I remember how it used to be when I was a—a sub——I am not to be done with your Mozel-wine and brandy, not I—so just

think about the matter while I'm gone, and we'll talk it over together."

On his return the cork was drawn, the wine was abundantly praised, and then they proceeded to business.

"It would be the best termination of the affair certainly," said Momper, "could it be managed safely; but I'm afraid there would be a great many troublesome inquiries."

"Pish!" cried Van Laret, filling his glass. "The mass should be sung, and all the rest of it, and I'd give her a good character; I'm no soldier if she isn't as good a cook as if she had been bred up in a monastery. Hang me if ever I ate such dinners in my life as she sends up to table. Heigho! I shall miss the old girl after all!" and feigning a sigh, he finished with a sort of demoniac chuckle at his own wit.

"I think I know a better way of getting rid of her," said Momper. "What say you to her taking herself off of her own accord, and asking you as a favour to let her go upon her travels?"

"Ahem! Ha!" exclaimed Van Laret; "a likely thing, i'faith. What! Give up such a place as this, and go on the tramp at her time of life? Hop off of her own accord, eh! No, no, master Momper, that brewing of yours is too strong of the hop." And again he laughed at his own conceit.

"Well, sir, but supposing that the matter can be brought about?" said Momper.

"Then I shall say that you are a cleverer fellow than ever I took you to be: and yet I have no bad opinion of your head neither, as you know, right well. Come, hand your glass this way. Such wine as this stirs up a man's wits. Now for it. What's your plan?"

"You must promise to assist me," said Momper, smiling.

"Aye, that will I, on the word of a soldier, be it with head or hand," was the reply; and the speaker suited the action to the word by placing his hand on the hilt of his sword.

The steward then revealed his plan, which

was simply that of frightening the poor old woman out of the castle, and sending her off into some distant country, to hunt for the bones of her grandfather, and give them Christian burial. Van Laret relished the joke immensely; and being, according to Mrs. Bhlum's own description, a good figure for the part, he resolved to personify the ghost; and, as he seldom hesitated to act after coming to a decision, he commenced operations the same night, in a manner which might have shaken much stronger nerves than those of his aged victim.

The next morning poor Mrs. Bhlum was seen to wander about the castle, with an unusual totter in her gait, and, ever and anon, casting a wild glance around, to the no small amusement and gratification of her persecutors, who resolved to follow up the game till she was fairly out of sight.

"Good morning to you, good mistress Bhlum," said Momper, purposely throwing himself in her way. "A fine morning, Mrs.

Bhlum! You have done well to take advantage of it to enjoy a walk."

"Ah, master Momper!" sighed the poor woman, "never was daylight more welcome to me than this blessed morning. Oh dear! I hardly dare tell you, but—but—it is all too true what you told me. I have seen my grandfather."

"Humph!" said Momper, looking serious, "I am truly sorry for you, my good friend, but you could scarcely expect that I should be troubled with him always. I told you if he came again I should send him to you; and, the night before last ——"

"Oh! the Virgin! I see it all now," exclaimed Mrs. Bhlum, "and that accounts for the blue light I saw over your tower last night but one."

"No doubt, no doubt," replied Momper.

"But why didn't you tell me of it yesterday?" asked the poor creature.

"Why should I teaze and torment you, my

good friend," replied Momper. "Methinks it is enough for your grandfather himself to do so; besides, after all, the business is between him and you, you know; it is no concern of mine."

"Well, but what would you advise me to do?" asked Mrs. Bhlum.

"Bury him, by all means," was the reply. "That's the only way, they tell me, of quieting your wandering spirits. Didn't he tell you where his bones were? I understand they commonly do."

"Oh, yes," she said, "he told me exactly where I should find him; but I was in such a fright that I can't recollect the name of the place, nor anything that he said, except that I should have no peace till I began my journey, and that it was of no use for me to stay here now, as the castle was in good hands, and I had done all that could be required for my old master."

"Well, well, I must say he spoke very sensibly," observed Momper; "and really it was very considerate of him not to come to you before, see-

ing that your compassion for him might have led you to forget your duty toward your old master. As you are his nearest relation, I don't see how you can possibly hesitate in granting so very reasonable a request. Indeed, methinks you ought to be very thankful that you have it in your power to perform so charitable an office."

"Indeed! But I'm not at all thankful," observed Mrs. Bhlum. "If I could ride scampering about the forest, as you do, or fly like a witch upon a broom-stick, it would be very different; but how am I to manage to go trapesing at my time of life? for I am not a young woman now, you must know."

"Well, well, take your own way, Mrs. Bhlum," said the steward, "only remember that there is such a place as Purgatory; and, when you get there yourself, and your poor grandfather remains wandering about, perhaps you'll be very sorry."

"Oh, Master Momper! Master Momper!

What shall I do?" cried the poor woman. "Oh, dear! I'll go to my old oratory, and say my prayers."

"Aye, aye, you can't do better," said her mentor, "for I must leave you, as I see our master coming this way."

Van Laret and his associate enjoyed much the perplexity into which they had thrown their victim; but, when the former was subsequently alone, a gleam of compassion, or the whisperings of some undefined apprehension, suggested to him that it would be better and safer to confine the old woman to her own apartment, under the pretext of her being past service. The only objection to such a plan was the expense, as she must have some one to attend upon her; and, moreover, in making up his accounts, he would be obliged to produce her receipts for the stipend allowed to her in consideration of past services, which was, according to his agreement, when put into possession of the estate, to be paid by himself. All this would be saved if she quitted

the place of her own accord ; and that consideration was too powerful to be resisted. The love of money prevailed, and decided him to pursue a course, fraught with consequences of which he little dreamed, and which it will be our task, in due course, to narrate.

CHAPTER II.

AT an early period of his life, Gerard Laret had married a young woman who, though poor, could claim a distant relationship with some of the principal families in the neighbourhood of Maestricht, a town which the Emperor Charles the Fifth had added to the Netherlands.

While his wife was living, Laret had frequently occasion to congratulate himself on the success which attended his applications to her connections for various desirable appointments, and his due share of promotion; but, after her death, he had been little indebted to them. On his advancement to the governorship of a castle, he thought fit to announce the event to Monsieur Andelot, the head of that branch of the family to which he understood his wife more imme-

diately to belong. For this step he had two motives—the one to gratify his own self-importance, and to show that he could get on in the world, in spite of the neglect of those who had formerly professed to be his friends ; and the second was a hope that they, like the rest of mankind, would be more willing to acknowledge and to serve him, in proportion to the evidence that he did not need their assistance. It seemed that, in the latter case, he judged rightly. An immediate and congratulatory reply was sent to his communication ; and, shortly afterwards, a messenger came to request him to meet Monsieur Andelot at Liege on particular business.

It was not in the nature of things that he should neglect such an invitation ; and he was not a little gratified when his newly recovered patron, after loading him with many compliments on the perseverance and success with which he had followed his profession, concluded the whole by informing him that it was now in

his (Laret's) power to render him a considerable service, at the same time that he would materially promote his own interest.

"There are two ladies of my acquaintance," continued M. Andelot, "who are desirous, for a few months, perhaps much longer, to reside in some pleasant retired spot. The present divided state of the country renders it extremely improper that they should be without efficient protection; and it appears to me that your castle, the situation of which I perfectly recollect, is precisely the place where I could wish them to be. As you have no family, perhaps you can contrive to let them have a suite of apartments. I will undertake to remunerate you for any expense you may be at, and you have only to state the sum now, or when you please, and I pass my word it shall be instantly paid."

To this tempting offer Van Laret, merely for the sake of making a better bargain, demurred for some time, and expressed his doubts whether the bishop, by whose immediate autho-

rity he had been put into possession of the estate, would approve of the increase in his household.

M. Andelot assured him that he would bear him harmless, being personally intimate with the bishop, as well as with his brother, the late governor of Valenciennes. And so, at length, the matter was arranged, much to the satisfaction of Van Laret, who immediately gave divers orders to certain friends of his, tradesmen in the town, for furniture and other articles, to be forwarded forthwith to his residence, and for which he resolved to be doubly paid, by charging them, in the first instance, on the estate, as necessary to make the castle habitable, and then to receive the amount from M. Andelot, as an outlay which he should not have made, but for the accommodation of the ladies.

This interview explains the purport of those preparations at Fort Santon, which were so very perplexing to Mrs. Bhlum, whom we left proceeding to her old oratory, with the laudable

resolution of calming her troubled spirits by the performance of acts of devotion. She had scarcely ended her third ave, when, casting her eye toward an opposite tower, she saw an object, which alarmed her almost as much as the ghost of her grandfather had done on the preceding night. But she had no time to contemplate it, for suddenly the horn of the bar-bican was loudly blown, and a trampling of horses was heard coming full speed towards the castle; and then there arose a tumult within the walls, and the voice of Van Laret was heard above all the rest, calling his men together. Then her own name was shrilly echoed along the walls, and Gaspar Momper summoned her to make her appearance and bestir herself, for the long expected guests had just arrived. There is no remedy for a diseased mind like the calls of duty. Mrs. Bhlum just cast her eye toward the south-western tower, and seeing nothing more than ordinary, quitted her orisons, and very soon appeared to have forgotten

ghost, grandfather, and the other perplexing vision, amid the bustle of preparation, and the indispensable duties of the toilet, which were necessary ere she chose to make her first appearance before the "new comers." Curiosity was Mrs. Bhlum's besetting sin, or ruling passion, as the reader may think fit to term it. She "wondered" who the ladies could be—why they came there, and how long they would stay, and so on; but her wonder was not in any degree diminished after she had been formally introduced to them by Van Laret, who, on that occasion, represented her as a most worthy woman, who had long had the entire control of all the domestic arrangements of the castle, and who would, he was certain, do every thing in her power to render his guests comfortable.

The lady to whom he addressed himself, while bestowing this encomium, could scarcely have passed any where without exciting attention. Her figure, somewhat above the middle

height, was of exquisite symmetry, which, from the gracefulness and ease of her motions, would display itself in spite of a cumbersome dark gray riding mantle, which was girt about her slender waist by a zone of gold lace, clasped with a massy buckle of the same material. An ebony crucifix hung suspended from her neck, by a string of black beads. A large riding-hat and veil, from which she had just disencumbered herself, lay on the table by her side, while the long dark tresses of her hair fell, clustering, upon her shoulders, as though rejoicing in their escape from imprisonment. Her countenance would have been of the purest Grecian form, but for the somewhat too bold projection of the under lip and chin, a peculiarity which, added to the extreme brilliancy and fire of her large black eyes, gave to the whole a tone of command almost amounting to haughtiness. Exercise and the pure air of the forest had, for the moment, excited on her cheeks a glowing tint, which, alas ! soon faded

away into habitual paleness. It was long since Isabella Freron had known peace of mind, and when that fled, the bloom of youth quickly passed away, and left her, when scarcely twenty, with all the appearance of a woman some five or six years older. And such she seemed at the present moment.

At her side stood a youth of fifteen, whose features so exactly resembled her own, save a lowering of the eyebrows, which, in one so young, seemed unnatural, that it was impossible not to pronounce them brother and sister. But Ernest was tall of his age, and extremely thin, as though he had outgrown his strength. The third and last of this group was a laughing, fair-haired, blue-eyed girl, scarcely ten years of age, a very child, who ran up to the aged house-keeper immediately she was announced, began to jingle the keys which were suspended at her waist, and entreated her to show her *all* over the castle. Mrs. Bhlum took her kindly by the hand, and promised to comply with her re-

quest; and then, with the utmost deference, received the very few instructions which Isabella had to give. In the meanwhile, Van Laret, who appeared to be little at ease in the presence of the new comers, had left the room, under pretence of seeing that his people looked well after the horses, a service for which he was certainly much better qualified, than for enacting the part of lord of the castle. Isabella felt, she knew not why, relieved by his absence; and her mode of speaking was so mild, so gracious, so very different from any thing that the housekeeper had witnessed for many years, that the poor woman's heart was completely won. She gazed upon her new mistress, and on the pale youth by her side, and on the sweet smiling child that yet held her by the hand, and could scarcely believe that she was not in a dream; all was so utterly unlike what she had latterly been accustomed to. Then she first remarked that all three were in deep mourning—not an article of their apparel but

was of that sombre hue, which tells of the recent visitation of death, save the belt of gold, which had evidently been worn from necessity, and which, now, Isabella, as if reading her thoughts, hastily took off and threw down, and then sunk upon a chair, and waved her hand as an indication that she had nothing farther to say.

A deep sigh fell upon the housekeeper's ear as she left the room, and she thought of the mourning suits; and then the recollection of the south-western tower flashed across her mind, and ere she had reached the end of the corridor, she sunk upon a wooden bench, and burst into a flood of tears. When we are plunged in grief ourselves, we more readily sympathise with that of others. Mrs. Bhlum's was, perhaps, a mingled emotion. Her own distress, however ridiculous the cause may appear in the present day, was, to her untutored mind, of an overwhelming character. Then, she had been hurried away from her prayers,

and for a short time lost sight of every thing else, amid the unusual exertion to which she had been called. But, now the impulse was at an end, the dark cloud came again over her, with the addition of strange fears and apprehensions on behalf of the strangers who had just arrived.

She was not long, however, permitted to indulge her melancholy alone. The little girl, whom Isabella had detained to divest her of her riding dress, now came running along the corridor, and, jumping upon the bench, clasped the old woman round the neck, and asked her what she was crying about. "If any thing is the matter," she continued, "tell me, and I'll tell Isabella. She is *so* good, and so clever too. Tell me; have you got the tooth-ache? What is it?"

"Nothing, my dear!" replied Mrs. Bhlum, striving to rally. "Nothing—it's all over now, and we'll go round the castle together, as soon as I've been into the kitchen to give orders about dinner."

"But it is something," said the child. "People don't go into a corner, and cry for nothing. Somebody's been behaving unkind to you. That nasty great ugly man, who was in the room just now, I dare say—but you needn't mind him, nor any body else, now Ernest is here. Oh! you don't know how brave Ernest is! Monsieur Andelot says he is *too* brave; but I don't think that's *possible* for a *man*; do you? And then he is *so* good, and so *kind* too, although he does frown and look so frightful sometimes, when he thinks nobody sees him. But then I go up to him, and tell him I won't love him, if he looks so; and then he smiles directly, and looks so handsome; and then I give him a kiss, for I do love him dearly, but you mustn't tell any body that I said so."

While their youthful companion was thus engaged with the housekeeper, the sister and brother were left alone.

"I don't like the looks of this new landlord of our's," said Ernest. "Did you observe how

Elinor shrunk away from him, and turned towards me, when he attempted to assist her in dismounting? Innocent children, like her, I have read, aye, and young as I am, have observed too, have a purity of instinct, a something by which they discern the evil disposed. It is a faculty which becomes blunted, or wears away in after life, I suppose, by contamination with our species, or men would not be so egregiously deceived in each other."

"Nay, my dear brother," replied Isabella, "you are too fond of theorizing. What could be more natural than for the child to look to you for assistance, when you know she never dismounts without your aid?"

"It is no idle theory, Isabella," continued her brother; the faculty belongs to childhood. Would to Heaven we could preserve it! I had it when I was quite a child. I remember when the murderer and tyrant, Philip, was clothed in all the pomp, and ——"

"My dearest brother!" cried Isabella, "Do

not allow yourself thus to speak of the king !
Even walls, they say, have ears in these times."

"Isabella, you are right," said the youth, solemnly ; "I know my time must come ; but for your sake, and for that of our oppressed country, and, more than all, for the sake of that religion which has been sealed by the blood of the martyrs, by the blood of——"

"Our father !" added Isabella : and crossing her hands, her head fell upon her bosom ; and she remained still as a marble statue of grief.

"Though, for myself, I could long to be gone," continued Ernest, in a deep hollow tone, such as he was accustomed to speak in when strongly excited, "I will not hasten the day, but wait my appointed time. Strong arms and stout hearts are wanted for the strife ; and a reckless, desperate hand like mine may do a deed that shall turn the boldest of them pale, even as they have made thee, my dearest, my beloved sister !"

And, kneeling down, he bent upon her neck, and embraced her.

The father of these orphans was a gentleman, whose family estate lay in Holland; but, some years previous to the time of which we write, he had been unfortunately induced to remove to the town of Valenciennes. His principal motive was, the education of his children, who would, in so large a place, enjoy many advantages for instruction, which they could not possibly receive in the retirement of a country life. The strength and populousness of the city was, moreover, a strong recommendation; and its vicinity to France would enable him to remove his little family into that country, should such a step appear advisable for their safety. These considerations plainly indicate that there had been rumours of war, and expectations of an approaching crisis. Such a feeling had indeed been general for some time; but latterly the Duchess of Parma, who appears not to have been naturally of a cruel disposition, had mani-

fested a strong disinclination to pursue the sanguinary measures indicated by Philip. The Duke D'Egmont had, likewise, gone to Madrid to represent to his sovereign the exact state of the Netherlands; and, from the manner in which he had been received at court, it was generally expected that, on his return, a milder system would be adopted, in place of that rigour which had been found utterly inefficacious in checking the progress of the reformed religion. Another feeling tended greatly to strengthen this delusion. The number of persons professing the new religion had now increased so greatly, as to render the work of eradicating it more like a depopulation of the country,* than the persecution of a particular sect. It was therefore ima-

* At this period the Prince of Orange, in justification of himself for allowing the Protestants to hold their meetings in Antwerp, represented to the regent, that when they assembled in the country, their numbers generally amounted to twenty-four or twenty-five thousand; and even in the town, were seldom less than ten thousand; and that he had no army to reduce such numbers to obedience.

gined that Philip would now suppress his religious scruples, and listen to the suggestions of prudence and his own interest, though he had long shewn himself deaf to the voice of humanity. But, during the whole of his reign, he seems never, for a moment, to have swerved from the conviction that fire and sword were the only proper means of extirpating heresy.

At length the storm burst forth. So far from retracting any of his sanguinary and oppressive decrees, he commanded that they should be carried into effect without loss of time, and sent money and authority for raising Catholic troops, in whom he could depend for implicit obedience to his will.

The first task of this newly-raised force was to take possession of Valenciennes, where the number of Protestants was not only very great, but, from their vicinity to France, they were enabled to carry on a correspondence with those of their own persuasion in that country. The inhabitants, at first, made a show of resistance;

but, unused to warfare, when they saw formidable batteries raised against them, their hearts failed, and they surrendered at discretion. The commander of the Catholic troops, Noircharmes, no sooner entered the city than he ordered the governor and his son, the Protestant ministers, and several of the inhabitants who had been the most active, to be put to death; after which, having prohibited the public exercise of the reformed religion, he left a strong garrison in the place, under the command of a rigid Catholic.

In the number of those who were sacrificed on this occasion, was Mons. Freron, who, impelled by conviction, and hoping for better times, had not hesitated publicly to avow his attachment to the reformed mode of worship.

In conformity with his last request, Isabella wrote to Mons. Andelot, and put herself and young Elinor Albert (whose parents had been condemned and suffered for heresy some years before) under his protection. Andelot had been long attached to M. Freron, but the existing

laws were such as to render it extremely dangerous to have any connection with heretics; and he doubted not that, as his late friend had embraced their doctrines, his example must have produced an effect on his family. Laret and the castle of St. Antoine presented themselves most opportunely to his recollection. There, it struck him, they would be safe; and, as he resolved not to ascertain what their religious opinions really were, he thought he might escape the rigorous* enactments of the law.

* This apprehension and caution will not appear extraordinary to the reader after perusing the following extract. "In the edicts against heresy it was enacted, that all persons who held any erroneous opinions should be deprived of their offices, and degraded from their rank. It was ordained, that whoever should be convicted of having taught heretical doctrines, or of having been present at the religious meetings of heretics, should, if they were men, be put to death by the sword; and, if women, be buried alive. Such were the punishments denounced even against those who repented of their errors and forsook them; while all who persisted in them were condemned to the flames. And even those who afforded shelter to heretics in their houses, or who omitted to give information against them, were subjected to the same penalties as heretics themselves."—*Watson's Life of Philip II.*

After making an arrangement with Van Laret, he repaired to Valenciennes, where, to his surprise, he found young Ernest, who, immediately he heard of his father's death, had quitted his studies at the University of Leyden and flown to the protection of his sister. This youth perplexed him exceedingly; for, moved by grief and indignation, he gave vent to his feelings by the most violent invectives against the king, the laws, and the accursed religion which inculcated tyranny and murder.

It became now utterly impossible for M. Andelot to solace himself with the idea of his ignorance relative to the opinions of one of his wards; but the friendship which had, for so many years, subsisted between him and their father, overcame his scruples; and at length, by representing to the youth the serious consequences which his violence might entail upon those who were dearest to him, and whom it was now his duty to protect, he produced the appearance, at least, of calmness. The grief of

Isabella was more tranquil; and he took especial care not to inquire into her religious sentiments: but, at the moment of parting, ventured merely to hint, that, if it were not particularly objectionable to her feelings, he should recommend her to adopt the fashion of wearing a crucifix suspended from her neck, as the surest method of dispelling any suspicion which might arise in the course of her journey. Isabella followed his advice, and had, more than once, cause to believe it was of service; particularly as Ernest would gallop forward, or contrive to find some interesting object in another direction, wherever they had to pass a cross or an image of the Virgin.

As M. Andelot had been bred up to the law, and still practised occasionally, he took care to represent to his acquaintance in the town, that the young people were merely his clients; and, as an advocate cannot be expected to inquire into the opinions of all by whom he may happen to be professionally employed, he trusted this expla-

nation would be sufficient to exonerate him from the consequences of being acquainted with Ernest, in case the conduct of that youth should, as he greatly feared, bring him into difficulty. Moreover, that his visit might not wear an aspect of a clandestine nature, he requested from the commanding officer of the garrison, an escort for two young ladies through a part of the country which he affected to believe it was not safe for them to pass unguarded. The commandant laughed at his apprehensions, and would not comply with his request; but the intended purpose was answered by the mere application, as Andelot concluded that no one could suspect him to have asked for Catholic soldiers to convoy heretics.

All these calculations served to show the character of Andelot, as that of a prudent man, who would not get himself into trouble if he could by any means avoid it. Naturally timid, he existed ever in a state of anxiety, perpetually plotting and planning against the approach of

some apprehended danger. It may appear strange that M. Freron should have committed the care of his children to such a person ; but that gentleman remembered the friend of his youth, and had a firm conviction of the goodness of his heart. Besides, his own faults, of which no man was more sensible than himself, were of precisely an opposite character. Warm, open, and impetuous, he was too much in the habit of acting and speaking according to the impulse of the moment, and seldom reflected upon the consequences till it was too late. It was not extraordinary, therefore, that, living under such a government as that of Philip, he had frequently reason to reproach himself for his want of prudence. And thus perhaps it happened, that he was induced to over estimate the value of his friend's cautious habits, and to believe that his children could not have a better guardian, during the difficult and troublesome times which he saw were approaching.

At the time when the orphans left Valen-

ciennes for their new abode, there was a movement in Holland, the knowledge of which would have assuredly induced young Ernest to have quitted his guardian, and even his sister, now that she was not friendless, so furious was the spirit of revenge that burned within him. But M. Andelot concealed from him that Count Brederode, after being refused admittance to the Regent in order to present a petition to represent the grievances of the people, had gone immediately into the north and collected a body of troops. By this silence he, probably for the time, saved the life of his young ward, who would instantly have joined himself to the revolters, and shared their defeat and disasters, when a short time after they were attacked by the king's troops under Count AreMBERG at VIANEN.

After that event the Protestant strife seemed to be at an end. "The reformers dared not lift up their heads." The laws appeared to be obeyed, and there was a perfect calm, a brood-

ing silence throughout the land. Men thought that in a kingdom composed of such heterogeneous materials, it could not last ; but they little dreamed from what quarter the storm would arise, nor with what unmitigated fury it would descend.

CHAPTER III.

UNLESS the reader, at some period of his life, has happened to live in a "bachelor's hall," he can scarcely form an idea of the change which is brought about by the introduction of a single lady within its walls; particularly if that lady be amiable, young, and handsome.

The metamorphoses wrought, by this cause, in Fort Santon, were extraordinary. The bluff, rough looking men brushed up their nether garments, and sedulously applied ochre and pipe-clay to their tarnished buff jackets; and those whose duty it was to keep alternate watch at the gate, instead of lounging upon the benches, now stood erect at their post with the air of sentinels.

Gaspar Momper's sombre habiliments as-

sumed a deeper and more equal tint, as though he had discovered the secret of the "patent black reviver:" and Mrs. Bhlum commenced a regular rummage through the contents of certain huge trunks, which had not been opened for years. Alas! The colours of many of her dresses were faded and clouded, by those mysterious chemical processes with which old time, the general consumer, delights to work in darkness; and the moths had made, as she said, "more free than welcome," with others; and the mice had made a pretty little nest with some of her best lace, by twisting, and tearing, and nibbling it about to their own content.

But still there remained enough "to rig her out," as the sailors have it, in a most antiquated and attractive style; and a strange figure she cut in the eyes of a young lady, just fresh from Valenciennes, where the last Parisian fashions were usually introduced within a month after their invention.

None of these trifles were lost upon Van

Laret. He was in excellent spirits, and enjoyed Mrs. Bhlum's cookery more than ever; for, owing to the increase in his establishment, and, to say the truth, an increased attention on the part of the housekeeper, his table now exhibited a greater variety of dishes than heretofore. His guests had represented to him, on their arrival, that lowness of spirits, in consequence of a recent death in the family, rendered them unfit for society, and, therefore, it was arranged that they should live in their own apartments: and no arrangement could be more satisfactory to Van Laret, who was thus relieved from the, to him, irksome duties of hospitality, and left, as he expressed it, "without any tie" upon his actions.

So he and Momper, and sometimes, by way of variety, one of his humbler followers, took their meals and their potations together; and he now indulged in them somewhat more freely, with the agreeable reflection that he could very well afford so to do, as he was "making a good thing of castle."

"That's a strange lad, that lanky guest of mine," said he to Momper one day, over a flask of wine; "I don't know what to make of him. He goes moping about, with a book in his hand, sometimes for two or three days together; and then takes it into his head to ride out and scamper about the forest like a wild hunter. I sometimes think he is'nt quite right in his head."

"May be not, may be not," replied Momper; "but people have different ways of amusing themselves. I thought, perhaps, he might like sporting, so I lent him a cross-bow, and had like to have got one of the bolts in my body for my pains; for there he was, pretty near all day, shooting at a mark, which he had stuck against one of the large oaks, by the turn that leads to the Namur road."

"Well, but you didn't go between him and the tree, did you?" asked Van Laret.

"Not I, I promise you," was the reply; "but he missed the tree, and the bolt went whizzing close by my head."

"Missed one of the old fourteen hundred oaks!" exclaimed Van Laret. "By the mass, then, he is not likely to bring us home much game."

And then, after a hearty laugh, and rallying Momper upon the fright, which he was sure he must have been in, he continued, "But the cross-bow is children's sport; where, in the name of St. Jago, can the boy have been brought up?"

"At some university or other," said Momper. "Aye, aye," resumed Van Laret; "make boys like old men, and then, when they come to be men, they're like children. Poor fellow! I'm sorry for him. But she's a fine woman, that sister of his, isn't she, Master Momper? By St. Jago, if I was some years younger——well, well, every dog has his day; but, she is something like a woman. She puts me in mind of Barbara Tromp, the young frow that used to wait at the Cardinal's Hat and Sword, at Turnhout; only Barbara was a span or so

bigger about the waist, and had a droll cast of the eye. Poor Bab! I wonder what's become of her!"

"I can tell you," said Momper. "She's just married her fifth husband, who keeps the Crook and Mitre, at Liege, at the back of the Bishop's palace."

"Her *fifth* husband! Well done, Bab!" exclaimed Van Laret. "Two of them were burnt for heresy," continued his companion, "and one was hanged, on suspicion of something or other, I forget what."

"Well, well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good," observed Van Laret. "Ha ha! So they burnt two of poor Bab's husbands! Well, well, she's a frow that's not likely to wait long for another; for, though I say it, that shouldn't say it mayhap, she might pick and choose just where she liked."

The next subject of discussion between these worthies was the persecution of Mrs. Bhlum, which they agreed to suspend, for the present,

under the conviction that her time was now too fully occupied to admit of her prying into secrets.

“And yet,” said Van Laret, “I shall be glad when she’s gone. I’ve a sort of misgiving about me respecting that woman, and can’t help feeling as if she was a sort of spy, kept here to watch everything I did. I hate your old servants of the old family. They never take to a new master as they ought: and yet she’s a good cook too, confound her. You must go over to Liege and Namur, Momper, and look out for another; and then I’ll give the old fool another visit from her grandfather.”

Under such a government as has been described, an establishment like that at Fort Stanton was not likely to be entirely overlooked by the clergy; and, as a matter of course, the incumbent of the adjoining parish came to pay his respects to Van Laret, and to inquire into the spiritual welfare of himself and his house-

hold, hoping they were all good Catholics, and were untainted with any of the pestilent doctrines and "newfangled" notions, which Luther and other heretics had introduced into the country. The new lord of the castle replied to these inquiries in the most satisfactory manner, by taking upon himself to answer for the orthodoxy of all within his walls; and vowed that, if he had the least suspicion of any one, even were it his own brother, he should not sleep another night beneath the same roof. He then proceeded to show his zeal by certain most emphatic maledictions against heretics "of all sorts and sizes;" affirmed that he would stick by the good old religion and holy mother church; and concluded with giving a specimen of his respect for her clergy, by inviting the priest to stop and dine with him in a family way.

Now the Reverend Pius Winkelman was a good-hearted, cheerful, plump, easy-going man, who was always much better pleased to find

that things were proceeding in their due course, than to have the trouble of setting them to rights. Trouble was a thing that he hated, and therefore he took no pains to inquire into the particulars of the recent heresies. It was sufficient for him that somebody had done so, and that they had been condemned ; and so he, most authoritatively, pronounced them *all* to be damnable, and warned his flock against “the wolves who went about, in sheep’s clothing, seeking whom they might devour.” The clergy of every nation and age, and of every denomination, have been obnoxious to a certain jocose manner of speaking, relative to their supposed somewhat unseemly attachment to the pleasures of the table. It is not for us to pronounce whether such a propensity really exist among them, more than among other classes of society ; but, if such be the case, we have often thought that it might be accounted for by the nature of their situation and employment, much more correctly and charitably, than by imagining them

to be overweeningly and gluttonously attached to the gratifications of a pampered appetite. Dwelling almost in retirement, or in a society necessarily much circumscribed, with little around them to excite the mind or imagination; and engaged in a routine of monotonous duties, too frequently of a painful nature, it cannot be surprising that the smiles of a cheerful circle have, for them, a double zest. The stagnant spirits of a well-informed, solitary man, are stirred and awakened in company, as the waters of the lake by the passing breeze; and a healthy tone of mind is, thereby, frequently imparted to men who might otherwise become ascetics or hypocondriacs. But "*ne quid nimis*," the remedy, like laudanum, may be taken too often. This, however, is not the place for entering more deeply into the inquiry, and so we return to the Reverend Pius Winkelman, who was assuredly never intended by nature, or fitted by the depth of his theological studies, to undertake "*the cure of souls*." But his parents had

decided upon his path of life, and so he jogged on in it, because it was too much trouble to change, till the hair was shaven off the top of his head, in due form, and then he got a living. And then the few scruples which had before occasionally beset him, respecting his "call and fitness," all forsook him : he found himself possessed of a contented mind, and ~~sate~~ *sate* himself quietly down, with the laudable resolution of living as comfortably as he could all the days of his life.

Not a little pleased was he to find such a table as Van Laret's within an easy distance of his quiet abode, particularly when he was requested to repeat his visits, as often as he could make it convenient, and assured of finding always a hearty welcome. His host, on this occasion, was actuated principally by recollecting the attachment of the ruling powers toward the church ; and, likewise, by a notion, common with men who have "risen in the world," that his importance among his own people would be increased by an intimacy with the clergy.

After one or two more visits, Van Laret declared that he should not have supposed a priest could have made such an agreeable companion. "What a difference," said he to Momper, "between him and some whom you and I have seen! By St. Jago, we'll go regularly to hear mass now, every Sunday and feast days, because he doesn't bother one for ever and doesn't mind trifles. By the bye, I should like another butt of that Markebrunner we tasted yesterday; but tell Wienbruer he must charge something less as I take two. It won't do to go to the Johannisberg too often, or we shall soon be aground."

According to his promise, Van Laret went the next Sunday morning to hear mass, attended by all his people, with the exception of two, who were left as sentinels at the gate.

Mrs. Bhlum anxiously watched their departure, and then hastened to her old oratory, ostensibly to say her prayers, but, in reality, with the hopes of ascertaining a fact, of which, from

a variety of trivial circumstances, she had begun to entertain suspicions. Kneeling before the casement, she kept her eye steadily fixed on the opposite window of the south-western tower; and then, after some hesitation, and with a palpitating heart, she ventured to cough somewhat loudly. Both the window of the tower and the oratory in which she was stationed overhung the rocky precipice, and were outside of the castle wall, so that she felt certain no one could witness whatever might happen. The space between her and the window was about twenty feet, and the day clear and bright; but she gazed for some time in vain, and then ventured another cough and a sort of significant "hem." The latter appeared to her to be repeated from a small grating in a lower part of the tower, and affected her nerves not a little: but she had made up her mind to see the end, and believed she had seen her grandfather's ghost without being any the worse, and so she stood firm. In the course of about a minute, which seemed to

her far longer, she clearly saw the head and face of a man at the opposite window, but the double grating and the darkness within rendered it impossible to distinguish his features.

"Who are you?" she exclaimed, in a loud whisper.

"A prisoner," was the reply.

"Oh, the holy Virgin!" said Mrs. Bhlum, "I thought as much: but what are you confined for?"

"I hardly know the cause," answered the prisoner, "but this I assure you, I have done nothing to merit such treatment; and, if you can aid my escape, I have ample means immediately to reward you most handsomely."

At this intelligence Mrs. Bhlum felt as if a purse of gold were within reach, for she had not lived, from her youth upward, in the castle, without acquiring the knowledge of certain secret passages, and modes of communication from one part to the other, with which such buildings were usually constructed. She represented,

however, the extreme difficulty and hazard of making the attempt, and told him how full the castle was of armed men, and how it was that she had been able to speak to him then, and how he had frightened her before, by appearing at the window when she was at prayers. In return, he informed her that he had often been on the watch, hoping for such an opportunity of speaking to her as had now occurred, for he was convinced that a person who said her prayers in secret, with such devotion, would never countenance the injustice and cruelty which he had been subjected to. His prison, he added, was in the room below, but he had, by accident, discovered a flight of steps which led to the window at which he then stood.

The above is the sum and substance of what passed, till it became prudent to put an end to the conversation, when it was agreed that Mrs. Bhlum should "see what she could do," and report progress at the same hour on the following Sunday, provided she could not find an earlier opportunity.

Big with her secret, Mrs. Bhlum sought the presence of her new mistress, as she called Isabella; and, without reserve, told her all she had seen and heard. "When you first came, ma'amselle," she continued, "I was afraid you were to be caged up too, and my heart misgave me when you spoke so kindly to me, and that was the reason why I couldn't help crying. But what a shocking thing it is to think that we are living in a jail! What would you advise me to do, ma'amselle?"

"In the first place," replied Isabella, "I recommend you to keep what you know an entire secret. And I am sorry to say that, even if you are acquainted with the means of setting the prisoner at liberty, you cannot be justified in so doing until you know *why* he is confined. His own vague assertion of innocence is not sufficient; and, notwithstanding his denial, he *must* have some notion of the charge brought against him. If he will persist in denying that, I recommend you to leave him where he is; for, if

he deceives you in one point, he will do the same in others, and has, most likely, been guilty of something very wicked."

"Oh, but if you had heard him speak," said Mrs. Bhlum, "I'm sure you would not think so. He talks so like a gentleman of consequence, who has been well brought up. I'm sure he is not guilty of any thing bad, or he couldn't talk as he does."

Isabella replied only by a melancholy smile to this observation, and then resumed—"I hope my own bitter experience has not made me hard-hearted nor unfeeling; but I have little reason to place confidence in the words of men. Prove to me that this person is innocent, and my endeavour shall be united with your own for his safety. In the meanwhile, the advice I offer is for your own security."

"Isabella had little sleep that night. Sometimes she upbraided herself for want of charity, in supposing that the unknown was guilty of any heinous crime, since she knew but too well

that prisons had latterly been the abode of some of the best of men ; and she sighed at the idea that he might be one of that number. Then she felt alarmed for her brother and herself, at the change in the character of their retreat, which this strange discovery had wrought. They were in a prison ! Yet she dared not communicate what she knew to Ernest, lest the eager spirit of adventure which she had so much difficulty to repress within him, should break forth, and induce him to undertake some desperate scheme for the prisoner's rescue, and, perhaps, for his own destruction. She would have decided on leaving the castle ; but then, where were they to go ? It was their only home, provided for them by their guardian, to whom their dying parent had desired her to look as to a second father. And, besides, although the castle was evidently a place of confinement for one person, it had hitherto been no prison for them ; for not the smallest restraint had ever been put upon their actions. They came in and

went out as they thought fit, without hindrance or inquiry; and her rides with her brother had frequently been extended to such a distance as to render all pursuit fruitless, had they entertained any idea of making their escape.

“In the midst of these reflections, and indeed, whenever she was alone, the image of one with whom, in happier days, she had exchanged vows of unalterable affection, *would* present itself. Were he present, and as once he was, how different would have been her situation! She dared not trust herself to contemplate the picture, for reason and her cooler judgment sternly told her that the time was now arrived when she ought to take farewell of the vain flatterer, hope.

Sometimes she deceived herself into a belief that she should be happy if she could learn that he had really forgotten her, and transferred his affections to one whom he could love as intensely as once she believed that she was beloved. “Such must be the case!” she thought, “or

nothing could have prevented him from finding me long ere now, particularly as the events at Valenciennes must be known every where. What was distance to him once? What was fatigue? He knew it not, save by name. Oh, yes, yes. He has seen the folly of uniting himself to one whose family is disgraced, whose very name has been proclaimed —— ” and the recollection of her father’s end rushed across her mind with a fearful presentiment that he might not have been the *only* sacrifice which she was called upon to make. Then she pressed her hands upon her burning forehead, and upbraided herself bitterly that she had, for a moment, doubted the sincerity and faithfulness of a being who now, perhaps, wore in heaven the crown of martyrdom. Such were Isabella’s secret griefs.

CHAPTER IV.

"I AM sure that cursed old woman suspects there is somebody in the southwestern tower," said Van Laret to his companion. "I have seen her several times creeping round it towards the evening; and there's an alteration in her manner too; for when I meet her now, she seems as if she was afraid to look me in the face, instead of speaking in the pert way she used to do. She shall budge, that's settled."

"I shall be heartily glad when she's gone," replied Momper; "she comes plaguing me with her everlasting stories and nonsensical fears. She's taken it into her head now that the black dog, Snarler, is an evil spirit."

"By St. Jago," said Van Laret, "I don't wonder at it. They are strange animals, those

blood-hounds, and a black one, they say, will now fetch almost any price. I've a great mind to sell him. The other three are quite as many as ever we are likely to want, though I shall take care to keep up the breed, as the Spanish officers will be sure to buy whenever they come this way. 'What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.' They'll be just as useful to run down the white game here, as they were for the copper-coloured devils on the other side of the water. Ha, ha, I shouldn't wonder but what they'd know the difference of the scent between one of your cursed heretics and a true believer, eh?"

"No doubt, no doubt," answered Momper. "Once lay 'em well on, and away they go, day and night; and that's the reason why your dark colours, particularly black, fetch the most money. They can't see to shoot 'em."

"Well, well," observed Van Laret, "there's some truth in that: but Snarler's a queer tempered dog, and looks very wild at times.

It was some time before he'd go out with me at all; and now, though I make him mind me, we're no great friends. I've my doubts whether he's thorough bred, after all."

"Hugo gives him a good character, however," said Momper, "and vows he's worth all the rest, only it's difficult to keep him at home; and sometimes, when he gets out, he goes howling round the castle all night."

Now the fact was that the dog in question did not belong to Van Laret, but had arrived with the prisoner then confined in the castle. The poor animal had missed his master on the night of his arrival, but seemed perfectly contented to remain as usual with the horse that brought him. On the following morning, however, his natural instinct led him to the southwestern tower, where he lay long whining and moaning at the doorway, which, as before mentioned, had in the meanwhile been filled up with solid masonry. This measure was adopted by Van Laret, in order that no one but himself

and Momper might be able to communicate with the prisoner, by means of a corridor, which led immediately from the chamber of the latter. Time, however, and the society of his own species, appeared in some degree to reconcile poor Snarler to his fate; but, as Van Laret truly said, he was not exactly like the other dogs; he would often separate himself from the rest, and go to some retired place, as if to ruminate on his situation, and endeavour to account for the extraordinary disappearance of his master. Poor Mrs. Bhlum's suspicions respecting him arose partly from his colour, and partly from his habit of following her, which he would frequently do with great pertinacity, wherever she went, simply because she was wont, after trying other methods, to give him a bone or some broken victuals, in order to get rid of him.

One morning Isabella was hearing little Elinor read her lesson, when the housekeeper entered the room, with her black attendant close at her heels. The lively girl instantly threw

down her book and began to play with the dog, who, although far from appearing disposed to enter into a frolicsome game of romps, allowed himself to be pulled about in any way she thought proper.

“La! Isabella!” said the child. “How much this dog is like Fido, Charles Randolph’s Fido!”

Isabella started, and Mrs. Bhlum, observing her emotion, thought she was alarmed for Elinor’s safety, and assured her that the dog was never known to bite anybody, although he was a bloodhound, if not something worse; “and so my dear,” she continued, taking the child’s hand, “I think you had better let him alone.”

“But, indeed, indeed, exclaimed Elinor, “he *is* exactly like Fido.”

“Oh, my dear,” said Isabella, all black dogs are alike; and it is a *long* while since you saw Fido, who was not quite black, for he had a small white spot between his fore legs.”

"And so has this dog," cried Elinor, putting her head below that of the animal and pointing to the mark.

Without knowing what she did, Isabella exclaimed, "Fido! Fido!" and the poor creature, who had looked at her attentively when she first spoke, suddenly leaped forward and began to caress her with a wildness of joy which soon drove Mrs. Bhlum out of the room, screaming for assistance, under the belief that he had gone mad, or else was indeed an evil spirit about to tear her new mistress to pieces.

Fido's paroxysm of delight had somewhat abated, and his head lay on Isabella's knee, as she bent forward and patted him, when Hugo, the gamekeeper, rushed in, followed by two of his men.

"Beg your pardon, ma'amselle," said he, doffing his bonnet; "but Goody Bhlum said as how the dog was worrying you, and had gone raving mad. Body o'me, but the old crone's gone mad herself, I think; it was but t'other

day she said that he was the devil, sent to torment her."

"Thank you for your zeal," said Isabella, forcing a smile. "You see we are very good friends; but tell me," she continued, with a calmness she found it very difficult to assume, "Whose dog is this? How and when did he come here?"

"It belongs to master," replied Hugo; "can't say where he got him exactly, ma'amselle, but think he picked him up at Liege, or somewhere thereabouts; had him about eight or ten weeks, or thereabouts, ma'amselle—a good dog upon the whole, only apt to get out o'the way sometimes, but never knew him do any harm neither."

"Thank you, thank you," said Isabella, "I'm sorry you've had any unnecessary alarm on my account."

"Oh, don't say a word about that, ma'amselle," replied Hugo; "happy to serve you at any time, ma'amselle. Shall I take him away with me?"

"No, I thank you," said Isabella, "the poor creature seems to have taken a fancy to me; so, if you please, let him remain here a little while, he will serve to amuse me."

"Certainly, ma'amselle, to be sure," answered Hugo; "but we've got better dogs than he, and, as you seem to be fond of dogs, ma'amselle, if you'll only just go with me to the kennel, I'll show you such a sight as can't be seen every day—real thorough bred, and I don't think Snarler is so *quite*, though I can't say much against him neither."

Isabella promised to avail herself of his offer the first opportunity, and was then left to ruminate on the unexpected renewal of her acquaintance with poor Fido.

"How so?" said Momper to his master, that afternoon; "you talked of selling the black dog. I think I can find you a customer."

"Ready money, cash down," cried Van Laret. "Sha'nt take less than twenty florins; indeed, I don't know whether I shan't ask

thirty. When the Spaniards come, they'll give any money for a thorough-bred black blood-hound. But where's your customer?"

"Oh, not far off!" replied Momper. "Somebody within the castle."

"Humph!" What, old mother Bhlum, I suppose?" said Van Laret. "Thinks he can scent out her grandfather's bones, mayhap, eh? Don't think it will do exactly, Master Momper. I'm afraid the old beldame can't come down with the ready."

"Well, well! it's not her I mean," resumed the steward. "It's the young lady."

"What!" exclaimed Van Laret, "ma'am-selle Freron want to buy a great lubberly hound like that! If it was a lapdog, indeed, I shouldn't wonder. But perhaps it's for little blue eyes to ride upon, eh?"

Momper could give no reason why the young lady wanted it. All he knew was, that she had taken a huge fancy to the animal, and the animal to her, and that they had been together all day.

"Well," observed Van Laret, "if people will take strange whims into their heads, and can afford to pay for them, they must have their own way, I suppose; but I shan't let that dog go for an old song, I can tell her that. Did she tell you to ask the price?"

"Oh, no! I havn't seen her," replied Momper. "But she told Mrs. Bhlum to inquire if it was likely you would part with the dog; as, if so, she should like to buy it."

"Humph!" said the master; "it sounds like dealing, somewhat. But, look! there she goes across the yard, and the dog with her, running round and barking, as if out of his wits. By St. Jago! they *have* taken a fancy to each other. Never saw the brute look half so lively before. He is really a fine dog!—Shan't take less than forty for him, anyhow! She's a fine figure, too, isn't she, Momper. Look you, old drybones! See how she is stretching out her arm, and the dog is leaping up to take her glove—and he's got it too—and

see how he struts before her, as proud as Lucifer! He's well worth fifty! Why, she's fairly bewitched the brute; and I don't wonder at it, neither, for I haven't seen such a wench, take her altogether, for this many a-day.—She's just like the picture of Di—Di—dammer.—What do you call it?—The goddess of hunting!"

"Diana," said Momper.

"Aye, aye! Diana, I mean," continued Van Laret. "But I'll tell you what, my fine fellow, she is *but* a woman, after all; and they're deucedly given to change their minds. You must nab 'em when you can, eh? or else they're off with a whiff. I shouldn't wonder if she wouldn't give a stiver for the dog to-morrow. So I'll just empty this bottle, and throw myself in her way directly, and strike a bargain while the iron is hot!" and with this laudable resolution he broke up the sitting.

He found Isabella and Elinor seated on the ground, about fifty yards from the castle-gate,

with the dog lying between them, and holding one paw upon the glove, which he appeared to consider as an honourable charge intrusted to his keeping. "Poor Fido doesn't seem to have forgotten any of his tricks," said Isabella, placing her hand gently on his head.

"Look! there's somebody coming!" cried Elinor. "It's Fido's master, I declare."

"What!" exclaimed Isabella, with an emotion which greatly alarmed her young companion; and then looking round, she continued more calmly, "Oh! yes—yes, I see!"

"Don't be frightened, dear Isabella," said the little girl: "he won't hurt you; for he daren't, you know, now Ernest is here."

"Oh, no, my love! I'm not at all alarmed; only you startled me just for the moment," replied Isabella.

"Fine evening, ma'amselle," said Van Laret. "Glad to see you out and looking so well. The air of the forest seems to agree with you, and your young friend too. But what's that great

dog doing with your glove? He'll tear it all to pieces."

"Oh, no!" replied Isabella, "I know his ways, and we're old acquaintances: it's not the first time that he has had my glove to take care of. Indeed, I wished to speak to you about him. I understand you have not had him long. Pray—pray—do you happen to know any thing of his—his history?"

"Why—no!" answered Van Laret, "not much of that: but this I can say, that he's the best and staunchest dog that ever I saw put upon a scent; and I wouldn't take any money for him."

"I am sorry to hear you say that," observed Isabella, evincing a woeful ignorance of the mean art of bargain-making; "for I wished to have purchased him of you, if possible."

"Buy such a great dog as that, ma'amselle!" exclaimed Van Laret, feigning great surprise. "Oh no, you must be joking. Why, he's pretty near as big and as strong as a jackass; but,

if you really must have a dog, the miller down below has got a nice little curly haired pup, just the thing for a lady, though I can't say much about his breed."

"No," replied Isabella, "this is the only dog that will suit me."

"Humph!" said Van Laret, affecting much concern, "I'm very sorry, very sorry indeed, ma'amselle. As for the value of the animal, I should ask you to accept of him at once, you see; for I never dream of selling dogs, not I; but the business is this, that it would spoil my set. The other dogs can do nothing without him."

"I am sorry to hear you say so," observed Isabella, "but you will surely be able to find another that will supply his place, and I shall be happy to pay you any expense that you may incur. In short, I have set my mind upon having the dog; for, to speak the truth, his former master was a very particular friend of my father's ——"

"And of yours too, and of mine too," exclaimed Elinor; "and so you see we *must* have him, that's settled—and what's more, old Fido won't leave us; will you, my dear, dear, old fellow," and she threw herself upon her favourite, who seemed to ratify the contract with lolling tongue and outstretched paws.

"I'm sure his master never would have parted with him but for something very particular," said Isabella, and then added, in a faltering tone, "You don't happen to know what was the reason, do you?"

"Why no, ma'amselle, not exactly," replied Van Laret; "but perhaps I *could* make out. I can't promise. It's such a world of ups and downs we live in, that — but, however, I'll see what I can do."

"Thank you, thank you," cried Isabella, "you will oblige me much, for really it—it interests me greatly."

"Humph!" said Van Laret to himself. "I see that plain enough;" and then he added

aloud, "I'll do all I can, you may depend upon it; and as for the matter of the dog, the best way will be for you to consider him as your own; and if I should be put to any expense, why, we can talk that matter over afterwards, I dare say we shan't disagree."

He then took his leave, vexed somewhat at not having gained a score or two of florins, but inwardly congratulating himself on the narrow escape he had had of selling what would probably have been discovered not to be his own property.

As he was entering the castle, revolving in his own mind what step he should next take to turn this adventure most to his own advantage, he was roused from his reverie by a boisterous outcry and loud peals of laughter, which he soon discovered proceeded from a group of his own men, who were dragging Mrs. Bhlum along as a prisoner.

To his inquiries respecting the cause of this

singular proceeding, the reply was, "that they had at last caught the thief," and a thin straight pole, more than twenty feet in length, was produced as the evidence of her guilt. It then seemed that these worthies, being great lovers of good beer, had resolved, now they were stationary, not only to brew for themselves, but to grow their own hops; and in prosecution of their plan, had with no small difficulty and labour, collected a number of poles, fit and sufficient for the support of the winding vegetation which was to yield them their beloved bitter. This choice selection they had carefully piled in the corner of a small unfrequented court, where it was supposed to be out of every body's way; but notwithstanding this precaution, a sensible diminution had latterly taken place, although Mrs. Bhlum had, on application made officially to her, severely rated all the maids on the subject, and declared that the first who was found out taking a stick from the pile, should be instantly turned away.

The men now surrounded their master, and called for his judgment against the culprit. Some insisted upon her being well ducked in the river, others thought the pond of dirty water half way down the hill more fit for the purpose; and one merry fellow besought his comrades not to let her get hold of the pole in question, or she would fly astride upon it, for no doubt she was a witch.

Poor Mrs. Bhlum appealed to her master, and entreated him to command her release, vowing at the same time that she had no intention of stealing the pole, but meant to restore it to its place after she had done with it.

"That's a likely story!" said the man who had captured her. "Then why didn't you ask one of us for it, instead of coming sneaking just in the dusk of the evening, and creeping away with it as you did? You think I didn't see you when you looked all manner of ways to observe if there was any body within sight? No, no—that won't do, goody."

"This is a strange business, my good woman," observed Van Laret, "What in the name of wonder can you want with a hop-pole?"

The poor creature being at a loss for a reply, since the truth could not be spoken, betook herself to snivelling and grievous lamentations, that she, who had never been suspected before, should be exposed to such barbarous treatment about a trumpery stick, which, after all, was as much hers as any body else's, or more, as it grew on the estate. But Van Laret, who began to suspect the real state of the case, was not so easily to be diverted from the point; and in a somewhat sterner manner again addressed her.

"Mrs. Bhlum. This is downright folly, and quite beneath you as a sensible woman. The men have a right to inquire into this business and to demand satisfaction. So I insist upon it that you tell them directly for what purpose it was that you took the pole."

"What can that signify to them?" shrieked the prisoner.

"Well, my lads," continued Van Laret, turning to his men, "as she doesn't choose to give any account of her strange conduct to me, I must leave her in your hands, to do what you like with her."

"Oh, oh, don't go! Pray don't go and leave me, master," blubbered Mrs. Bhlum, "and I will tell—I *will* indeed—Oh dear!"

"Well then, speak out at once," said Van Laret, "I can't stay here all night."

"I only—only took it to hang my clothes on," was the reply.

"Clothes! what clothes?" asked the master, sternly, "I thought you women were used to hang your clothes on lines?"

Mrs. Bhlum, having now found a subject to speak on, entered into a bewildered account of the state of her wardrobe, and certain scouring dyeing, and revivifying processes, in which she had latterly been engaged; and, for the completion thereof, asserted that the long pole in question was absolutely necessary to expose

them to the sun and air. Van Laret believed not a word of this rigmarole story, but feigned to be convinced of her innocence. As she had, however, been found guilty of taking the pole, in a manner very unsuitable to the importance of her situation in his household, he declared that the men were highly commendable for taking her prisoner; and concluded by pronouncing it to be his good will and pleasure that she should not only do her best, as housekeeper, to make them merry that night, but allow them a reasonable compensation for the thefts previously committed on their pile of sticks, hinting that she most likely knew where they were gone.

He then left them, satisfied that they would find the housekeeper employment for some time, and repaired immediately to the steward's apartment. "Momper," said he, "I want the bunch of master keys; and you must go with me directly to that cursed old woman's chamber;" and he related the circumstance which

had just occurred. "I thought I could not be mistaken," he then added, "when people change their usual manners, there's always something in the wind; and, just now, too, when I talked of her giving the men a compensation for their loss, she made no objection, but seemed glad enough to get off anyhow. No, no, that pole was to reach the window of the prisoner's tower. She's too fond of her money to consent to part with any, if she had not good reason to expect to get more—so come along, come along, my boy, and we'll ferret her nest."

The two wily associates had not long to search ere they discovered strong evidence against poor Mrs. Bhlum. There was in her drawer a scroll of paper, inclosing some pens and a little bottle of ink, carefully tied up with packthread, and furnished with a running loop, to be suspended from the end of the pole in question. In order to account for these preparations, it may be as well to state here, that Mrs. Bhlum had contrived another short con-

versation with the prisoner, in which she informed him that some persons of greater consequence than herself took an interest in his case; but were unwilling to take any steps for his deliverance till convinced that he was innocent. The prisoner, in reply, said, that if he were furnished with writing materials, he was prepared to satisfy the most incredulous; and the poor woman promised that he should have them by means of one of the unfortunate long poles, to which her attention had been called by the complaints already alluded to.

The searchers carefully left every thing in her chamber in the same state as before they entered it; and, when she retired for the night, she found herself in unusually high spirits, towards which, perhaps, more than one cause contributed. She had, she thought, cunningly outwitted both master and men, and the latter had agreed to abandon any claim upon her purse for their losses, wisely concluding that, as a division would make the amount very

small for each, it was better to keep on good terms with the housekeeper. Moreover, it had been a very merry evening; and it is possible that she might have taken a very little more than usual, in order to do justice to the good cheer which, according to her master's orders, she thought it her duty to produce upon the occasion.

When the bell tolled twelve that night she was so deeply engaged in the enjoyment of a refreshing snore, that her chamber was entered without her being aware of the intrusion. "Gertrude Bhlum!" exclaimed a deep hollow voice, to which the only reply was a grunt. The solemn call was repeated with a similar effect; and, then, again, it was uttered in a louder and more vehement tone, and the poor creature started amazed from her sleep, to behold, as she thought, the spirit of her grandfather, arrayed in all the horrors of the gallows and the grave. The rope about the neck, the effects of strangulation, and all the disgusting

and appalling details, were exhibited with an accuracy which would have deceived more scrutinizing eyes than that of the present victim. A blue light, which the figure held in his hand, rendered the whole visible, whilst its flickerings gave a strange uncertainty and perpetual change of form to the features of the countenance.

“I am come again,” said the appearance in its usual hollow tone, “I will not endure further torment or delay. So, listen to what I say—” and he proceeded to describe, with extreme accuracy, the spot where his bones were deposited, after his execution, between two trees, at the bottom of a garden belonging to a house which was the centre of a row of five, nearly opposite the church of the village of Ulterdam in Zealand.

Mrs. Bhlum listened, as well as her fears would permit, to this unpleasant commission, and became sensible that it was precisely the same account which her grandfather had given in his previous visit. At length she summoned resolution to falter out a promise that she would go.

"Aye," continued the figure, "but you must go directly. There is no excuse now. You are not wanted here."

"Oh, but indeed, indeed, let me stop a little while longer," she implored. "Only a week or so—I—I shall be better prepared for my journey."

"Not a day," replied the figure sternly.

"Oh, if you knew *all*, you would not drive me away *now*," cried Mrs. Bhlum. "Let me stop a little longer, and I will have a score of masses chaunted for your poor soul, or more than that perhaps. Oh! if you knew all I intend to do for you, you would not hurry me away now."

"I do know all," said the figure. "Yes, Gertrude Bhlum, I do know *all*. Beware how you pry into matters that don't concern you!"

The poor woman's habit of talking was so inveterate, that it seemed scarcely to be controlled even by the presence of a ghost; and, backed by information, which she considered

authentic on the subject, she ventured to question her grandsire's veracity.

"How can you possibly know any thing of the matter?" she exclaimed, "for you can't walk about except by night. Besides—it was Sunday morning too—and, besides, the old oratory has been consecrated, and so that can't be."

"Beware how you go there again," said the figure, "or you shall have a warning you little dream of."

He then repeated his injunctions that she should set out upon her expedition immediately, accompanied by divers threats in case of non-compliance; and then, having obtained all the information he sought for, retired.

"This comes of going to mass, and leaving women at home of a Sunday morning," said he to Momper, throwing off his mummery; "I can't think what the devil put it into my head; and yet *now*, I suppose, it won't do to leave it off just at present. Come, let's have a glass of

wine. I think I've given the old cat a dose this time that will send her packing, however; and yet I've my doubts whether a leaden pill wouldn't be better for her."

"To my thinking," observed Momper, "it's never worth while risking a hue and cry when one can help it; besides, the river runs pretty strong, and she'll soon be far enough out of the way of doing mischief here."

"I wonder if she's told my young guest," said Van Laret; "but I dare say she has, for women, old and young, are just like hens upon a dunghill. Directly they find any thing out, they can't keep it to themselves, but must begin cackling about it, and calling all the rest together. However, I don't care much about that matter, for she's a different sort of person—besides, I know something she little dreams of; and so, when the old one is gone, mayhap she and I shall have some talk together."

Momper "pumped" his master for an explanation, but the latter resolved not to show

himself, like the silly fowls, to whom he had so ungallantly compared the fair sex. He thought he saw "a good thing" in his way, and was resolved to keep it to himself. So he merely said he had had some talk with Isabella about the black dog, but they hadn't "come to terms;" however, he thought they most likely should in the end, and for the present she was to keep the animal as if it was her own.

"What's that?" exclaimed Momper, "there's something moving in that corner."

"What—where—how?" cried Van Laret, starting up and seizing his sword.

"There, there—look," said Momper, "there it goes, a long trailing thing upon the ground."

"By St. Jago!" ejaculated Van Laret, "it's that same infernal black hound, and he's got clean out of the room with something—what can it be?"

They searched, and found that a rope was missing, which had been dipped in the blood of a sheep, and formed part of the lord of the

castle's paraphernalia in his recent magnanimous enterprise of frightening a poor old woman.

"Shall I follow him?" asked Momper.

"No, no, not at this time of night. You'll alarm the people, and its ten to one that you find him; but I wish he hadn't taken it. However, put the other things by, in case I *should* want them again."

The two associates then separated.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. BHLUM, effectually aroused from her slumbers, found it utterly impossible to renew them, and lay restlessly awaiting the dawn of day, which no sooner appeared than she got up and dressed herself, and began to ruminate upon her plans.

“Go, I must,” she said, “that’s plain enough: but how I shall find my way I can’t tell; I don’t know where Zealand is; but then, perhaps, Master Momper, or the master, can tell, for they seem to have been pretty near all over the world, one or other of ’em.”

So she set about her preparations with a heavy heart, selecting such articles from her wardrobe as she thought most becoming, or the most likely to command respect among strangers.

While thus engaged, the plea which she had made use of on the preceding evening, naturally occurred to her mind, and she very imprudently resolved to keep up the farce of the long pole, in order to banish all suspicion. Choosing, therefore, some of the most gaudy coloured gowns and petticoats, perquisites of her service in years long gone by; she, with infinite labour and difficulty, contrived a sort of rag-fair exhibition, which she ostentatiously thrust forth from her window, as if in triumphant evidence of her veracity.

In consequence of rising so early, she had been able to accomplish all this before the usual hour of her attendance to household duties, which she quickly despatched, and then sought her new mistress, to relate her troubles and ask advice.

A belief in the occasional appearance of departed spirits was very general at that period. It pervaded all ranks; and the reformers, to whose opinions Isabella naturally inclined,

were frequently more credulous and visionary on that point, than even the staunch upholders of the Romish doctrines.

“I have heard of far more extraordinary and alarming apparitions,” she said. “There is a mystery, a fearful mystery, in such things; but I have never heard of any evil happening to those who obeyed the injunctions given on such occasions. Indeed, those visitations have commonly tended, eventually, to bring to light some undiscovered deed of guilt. On the contrary, some who have neglected similar warnings, are said to have been fearfully punished for their disobedience.”

“If I could but stay to see the end of this business of the prisoner in the south-west tower,” said Mrs. Bhlum, “I shouldn’t care so much about it—and I told him so. Because, then, if the gentleman should give me any thing, I shouldn’t care for expense so much, and could pay for the masses and all the rest. But he said he knew all about that, and that I

mustn't stop, but go directly; and if I meddled with other people's affairs again, I should have a warning of some terrible nature."

This latter threat awakened Isabella's suspicions respecting the real character of the alleged spirit; but, under all circumstances, she concluded it would be advisable for Mrs. Bhlum to withdraw, whether the injunction proceeded from an inhabitant of this world or another, since there was great danger to be apprehended from resisting the will of either!"

When Van Laret was applied to, he affected, at first, to treat the affair with levity, and told Mrs. Bhlum that she must have been dreaming; but Momper took up the business more seriously, and, with a grave aspect, asserted that he had reasons of his own for believing in such matters. He then related some marvellous tales, of a nature which made the poor old woman quake, and feel exceedingly thankful that she had escaped so easily; and, thereby,

Van Laret seemed to be at length convinced that there was really something serious in the matter, and requested Mrs. Bhlum to be seated, and pitied her case exceedingly; and lamented much that he should be deprived of her valuable services; but, of course, he could not think of detaining her, after what Momper had said, by which it appeared that any delay would be attended with imminent peril both to her body and soul.

At this crisis, the reverend Pius Winkelman made his appearance, whereat Momper's eyes twinkled with delight, as he hoped the priest would offer to sit up with the old woman, and lay the ghost with bell, book, and candle; in which case he augured that they should have rare sport. But Winkelman evinced no great curiosity to behold such a sight; and did not think, conscientiously, that he had any business to interfere, as the spirit had not required the execution of an *illegal* act; and if its commands were obeyed, would probably never

trouble the castle any more. He, therefore, corroborated the counsel already given, by a strong injunction to Mrs. Bhlum to depart immediately; and added his blessing, wishing her a safe journey and a speedy return. Van Laret likewise added his good wishes, and paid her the amount due to her for wages, taking her receipt in presence of the two witnesses. Nothing now remained but to await the arrival of the public passage-boat from Namur, a conveyance by which alone Isabella insisted upon her travelling; and that was expected, on its way downward, about five o'clock in the afternoon.

"I am sorry that I can't ask you to dine with us to-day," said Van Laret to his reverence, as soon as they were left together; "for this business of the housekeeper's has put us all so at sixes and sevens, that Momper and I must take a snap, as we can, in the larder."

Winkelman thanked him for his consideration, and said that the fare of the table was a matter of no sort of importance; agreeable

society was the only thing that ever induced him to dine out, for no man cared less than he what he ate and drank ; but the fact was, that he was particularly engaged on that day. Accordingly, he soon took leave, and then Van Laret told Momper to keep a sharp look-out upon the motions of Mrs. Bhlum, for the few hours she had to remain in the castle. " She has some devil's trick in her head yet," he continued, " or else, after what you and I know, she wouldn't have taken the pains to hang all that trumpery out of her window. But she'll be cunning if she escapes both of us, I think."

The housekeeper was that day extremely busy about the preparations for her master's dinner, taking care to select those dishes to which he was most partial, and giving them the benefit of her own personal superintendence, having often remarked, that in proportion as the cooking was to his mind, so much the longer he and Momper remained at table.

When she concluded them to be deeply en-

gaged in "discussing" the important meal, she betook herself to her chamber, and after showing her head at the window, and shaking the long pole and its burden, as an evidence that she was then busily engaged, she hastened down the back stairs, with the little packet of writing materials, and stole away into the hop-pole court, *now*, without fear of being apprehended, having told the proprietors that she might, perhaps, require the use of another for an hour or two.

With much trepidation, and far greater difficulty, she contrived to trail after her the cumbersome implement of communication; and at length, by placing it against the wall, while she ascended, and then drawing it up after her, she gained the old oratory, armed at all points, for the accomplishment of her design. She then coughed and hemmed, as heretofore, and the same effect was produced. The person in confinement made his appearance behind the grating. "I can't come again for a fortnight

at least," she whispered loudly; and then making a sign for him to be silent, she began to thrust forth the pole, with the little packet attached to the extremity. Its progress was slow and awkward, and perhaps her strength would have been insufficient to extend it as far as its destination, from whence she hoped to withdraw it with a bag of money at the end. But when it was half way across, a sudden explosion took place below, a ball whizzed by her head, and a smoke arose from the trees beneath, as the pole, falling from her hands, went leaping down the precipice. As a matter of course, she uttered a most piercing shriek, and the prisoner called loudly to know if she was hurt. His vehemence served more than any thing else could have done to recal her to some degree of presence of mind. She replied, "No, no," and placing her finger on her lips, to entreat silence, hurried away from the spot. The poor woman lost no time in communicating this circumstance to Isabella, who shook her

head, and desired her to remain with her till the time when the boat should be in sight, when she and her brother would go down the hill with her, and see her safe on board.

"We may finish our dinner quietly now," said Van Laret, taking his seat. "She's had 'a warning,' as grand-papa told her."

"It would have done you good to see how she came flying down the old broken steps in the wall," observed Momper, "just like a young girl. She's gone to tell all about it to Mademoiselle Freron."

"Aye, aye, I'll soon set all that right, when once we have got quit of the old one," said Van Laret. "By St. Jago, an old woman's the very devil. I always had a misgiving about her, and don't half like letting her go now. What boat is she going by?"

"The public boat from Namur to Liege and Maestricht," replied Momper.

"Curse the public boats!" exclaimed Van Laret. "Couldn't we find an honest fellow that

would take her off cheap in a small boat, and just by accident give her a ducking? The river's deep enough in some parts for her to go and grope after the bones of her grandfather, eh?"

"It's too late now to think of that," replied Momper.

"Well, I suppose then, she must go," said Van Laret, filling and emptying a tumbler of wine. "But I don't know why it is, I have a presentiment that some ill luck will happen to me through that infernal old one-eyed hag."

At length the passage-boat was declared to be in sight; and the housekeeper's trunk, fastened on the back of a mule, made its exit through the castle gate. The owner soon followed, escorted by Isabella, Ernest, and little Elinor, while Fido ran barking round the group, and scampering to and fro, to evince his self-importance and delight, after the manner of his kind. And by this honourable retinue was Mrs. Bhlum accompanied down the hill,

and delivered, safe and sound, on board the Vrow Margareta, the commander of which gave Isabella his word, that he would look well to the comfort of the elderly dame; and, consequently, turned her into the ark-like cabin, to take her chance with the rest of his passengers.

Isabella wrote that night a letter to her guardian, requesting to be removed from her present residence, for reasons which might, perhaps, appear frivolous on paper, but with which she was certain he would feel satisfied, if his leisure would permit him to pay her a visit. She then retired to rest, not without some vague apprehensions of danger, to guard against which she admitted Fido to sleep in her apartment, instead of the ante-room, where he had taken up his quarters since his promotion. All, however, passed off quietly; and, in the morning, she was contriving how she should send her letter to Monsieur Andelot, when she received a message by Momper, to say, that if she was at

leisure, Van Laret wished to speak with her *alone*. Had her brother been in the way, she would assuredly have declined the proposed *tête-à-tête*; but he, according to his wonted custom, had gone out into the forest, from which he frequently did not return till the evening. Knowing no way of escape, she, therefore, constrained herself to say, that she should be happy to receive the governor, little dreaming how much his communication promised to affect her.

As little Elinor was in the room when Van Laret made his appearance, and he was aware that children have ears, as well as grown-up persons, it was, for some time, impossible to guess what he "was driving at;" but at last he contrived to whisper to his fair guest, that it was absolutely necessary they should be quite alone; and with some difficulty the child was induced to go out into the court, to have a game of romps with her poor dear Fido.

Van Laret then paid Isabella so many compliments on her good sense, propriety of con-

duct and discretion, that she began to apprehend he was about to make her an offer of his hand. From this truly feminine alarm, she was, however, soon relieved, as he continued—"What I am about to tell you, mademoiselle, may appear, perhaps, at first, something like a breach of my duty; but I think I know pretty well the parties in whose hands I am, and I am sure you will not take any unfair advantage of the confidence I place in you."

Here Isabella bowed assent.

"When we were speaking yesterday, mademoiselle," he resumed, "about the dog, you said that you were extremely anxious to hear something of his former master."

"Yes, yes, I—I did—say so," gasped Isabella. "Do you know any thing of him? Is he well? Is he—a—alive?" and she nearly sank from agitation.

"He is both alive and well," replied Van Laret.

"Thank God! thank God!" she exclaimed,

and tears of joy started to her eyes. Then, suddenly catching a glimpse of the governor's cold calculating features, a flash of doubt passed across her mind, and she cried, "Oh, man, man! Tell me the truth! Are you not deceiving me?"

"No, indeed," was the reply. "On the honour of a soldier and a gentleman, what I tell you is the truth; that is, unless my *own* eyes and ears deceive *me*; for I saw and spoke to him yesterday."

"Yesterday? yesterday?" cried Isabella; and she passed her hand across her brow, as if to be satisfied that she was not in a dream. "Why, surely you were not absent from home all day yesterday?"

"Perfectly right, ma'amselle; perfectly right," was the reply. "I see, you can put that and that together."

"Then," she continued, "he must be within the castle."

"A shrewd guess, by St. Jago," cried Van

Laret, slapping his thigh ; and then, assuming an air of generous and manly confidence, he continued—" You have hit it, ma'amselle. Here he is safe and sound ; and, what's more, you shall see him, and convince yourself of it, whenever you like."

Isabella's heart throbbed violently ; the colour came and went from her cheeks ; and she wished to have been alone for a few moments ; but there sate Van Laret, with his huge unalterable countenance glaring upon her, and marking every change.

" Gracious heaven !" she exclaimed, " here ! and a prisoner !"

" Why, as to that," said the governor, " he was *sent* here as a prisoner ; but how he'll go away depends upon circumstances. So don't alarm yourself about that matter, because, mayhap, there's no occasion. However, as I hate roundabout ways of going to work, I like to come to the point at once. He was sent here to me, under a guard ; and my written instructions

are, not to allow him to be visited by any but trusty persons of my own household. Well, now, I look upon you to be a very trusty person, mademoiselle—eh?—you see? It's just according to the letter of my instructions, if you choose to go and pay him a visit."

"Oh, yes, yes; thank you," Isabella uttered, in extreme agitation, and scarcely knowing what she said; "thank you. Oh, yes, I will go; show me the way. No, not now! I shall be better in a minute or two. Oh, heavens! Charles Randolph a prisoner within these walls!"

"Who, did you say?" exclaimed Van Laret, with a look of surprise and disappointment. "No, mademoiselle, *that* is not the name of my prisoner."

Isabella nearly swooned away at this cruel contradiction; yet, with pale and quivering lips, faintly murmured, "Did you not say he was the master of that dog?"

"And so he is, ma'amselle," replied the governor; "and that was the true reason why I

couldn't sell him to you. But, oh! soho!—I have it! Don't flurry yourself, my gentle lady. It's all right, after all, I'll be bound. He's not the first, by many, that's been glad to leave one of his names behind, in these ticklish times. By the mass, there was one fellow put into limbo, and pretty near burnt too, because his name was Martin. If he'd happened to have been called Luther too, St. Jago himself couldn't have saved him."

The cheering ray of hope again broke in upon the gloom of poor Isabella's stricken spirit. Nothing was more probable than Van Laret's surmise. She well knew that many, who had resolved to emigrate from their oppressed country, had been compelled to adopt the expedient, in order to escape the vigilance of an infuriated government. It was not, however, in her character to remain lingering, in the dull gleam of hope deferred, when she had the means of ascertaining the truth. Summoning all her fortitude for the encounter, she boldly resolved, at

once, to visit the prisoner; and Van Laret agreed to attend her in half an hour.

It was, perhaps, well for our heroine that she had time for reflection, to prepare herself for either event, overwhelming joy or bitter disappointment; yet, when the governor made his appearance, her whole frame trembled with agitation. Ashamed of this display of weakness, she requested him to lead the way and she would follow. They proceeded, along various passages, to the tower usually occupied by Momper, who had been despatched on some distant errand for the occasion. From thence a corridor led them to the head of a winding stone staircase, at the foot of which was the door of the prisoner's apartment.

During the half-hour of delay Van Laret had arranged a place for this visit, in the propriety of which Isabella fully agreed, immediately he made it known to her, naturally shrinking from the idea that a stranger, perhaps a guilty wretch, should be a witness to the disappointment which

she might be doomed to experience. The governor's precaution was, like all his actions, entirely selfish; and was merely intended to prevent Isabella from seeing his prisoner, in case he should not prove to be the individual respecting whose fate she was so deeply interested.

According to this arrangement Isabella seated herself upon the lowest step, close to the door, so that she could hear every word that passed within, without being perceived by the prisoner. Leaving the reader to imagine her feelings, while she remained there alone, we shall proceed to relate what followed.

Van Laret turned the massy key, and drew back two strong iron bolts, which secured the door externally, and then, entering the apartment, which, for a prison, was fitted up very commodiously, he civilly bid the prisoner "Good morning."

"I have passed a restless night," was the reply. "Tell me, was the poor woman hurt yesterday in endeavouring to befriend me? I

care not for myself. Do what you will with me, but don't let her be punished; for I attracted her attention first, and induced her, by promises of ample reward, to attempt what she did."

"Make your mind perfectly easy about her," said Van Laret; "the gun was merely fired to alarm her, and nobody knows any thing about the matter except you and I and the old woman; and, if she says no more about it I'm sure I shan't. The *smell* of powder's quite enough for her, I'm thinking. But my business here this morning is something that concerns yourself."

"Aye, aye, no doubt," observed the prisoner, "closer confinement, in consequence of the late attempt. Well, I'm in your hands, and you must do your duty: but I trust you will not treat me with unnecessary rigour; and, indeed, from the manner in which you have hitherto provided for my comfort, I have no reason to expect it. But I know you have hard task-masters, and must perform their bidding."

This compliment sounded most gratefully in

the governor's ears at this moment, as he reflected who was listening; and the prisoner, though actuated somewhat by policy, was not insincere in paying it; for, in order to secure the necessary privacy, his meals had always been provided by Momper, from the table prepared for his master and himself. As the prisoner could not be aware of this circumstance, he naturally concluded that the constant change and excellence of his diet, concerning which he otherwise cared very little, was a proof that those who had the charge of his confinement were disposed to render it as little irksome as possible. And it was this arrangement which served to confirm the suspicions of Mrs. Bhlum, in whom seven years on board wages had produced a habit of nice calculation, by which she discovered that her master and the steward not only ate prodigiously, but sometimes made away with the bones of fowls and fish.

To return. Van Laret assured the prisoner that so far from the present visit being made

with any intent to restrict his liberty, its purport was quite of a contrary kind, and might, eventually, procure his release. "But," he continued, "you must deal openly and candidly with me. Tell me, in the first place, is your name really and truly William Snell?"

"Most certainly it is," was the firm reply.

This information was not at all necessary to the listener without, whose ear had been too long familiar with the tones she hoped to hear, to be for a moment in suspense. But there she continued to sit, like a statue fixed in its place, while the sounds from within came and went unheeded, or fell, like the tickings of the clock on an idiot's ear, producing an effect only by their cessation. There was a dead silence within, during which Van Laret was decyphering a name which he had committed to paper. Isabella was roused by this—she started—and prepared to retire—when she heard the following question:

"Have you not sometimes gone by the name of Charles Randolph?"

"Never," replied the prisoner, "but I have a dear and intimate friend of that name. We were at college together at Louvain."

"And he gave you the dog that came here with you?" inquired Van Laret.

"He entrusted it to my keeping," said the prisoner, "I hope the poor animal is well taken care of?"

"Oh, he is in excellent condition," replied the governor, who felt highly delighted at the turn things had so suddenly taken, when he had almost given up the affair as a bad job. "I am very fond of dogs myself; but he has met with a much better friend, an old acquaintance, a lady, whom he follows about every where, and who knows all his tricks."

"It's very strange!" murmured the prisoner. "There never was but *one* lady whom Charles

Do you know *her* name!" asked Van Laret.

"I do," said Snell, gravely, "but it is one that I respect too much to ——"

"I'll help you," cried the governor, smiling, "it is Isabella F——"

"Freron!" exclaimed the prisoner, "is it possible she can be here! Is she too a prisoner?"

"No," said Van Laret, "she is no prisoner, but she is here for all that, and can speak for herself—and so now, ma'amselle," he continued, raising his voice, and coarsely throwing back the door, "I've broke the ice, and should recommend you now to walk in and cross-question the prisoner yourself."

Snell's astonishment did not prevent him from sympathizing with Isabella's embarrassment at this rude mode of introduction. He received her with the utmost deference and respect, and soon succeeded in restoring her to some degree of self-composurè. To her inquiries if he knew where his friend then was, he replied, that he hoped—he believed, that he must have arrived in England. "We last parted," he said, "at Bruxelles; and, shortly afterward, as I was on

my way to visit my relations, who had, as I understood, made preparations for ——”

Here he hesitated, and Van Laret, who well knew that his presence was the cause, observed, “It’s all right, all right to be cautious. Indeed I’d much rather not hear any thing about the matter. I’m not fond of this jail-keeping, not I; and it’s a cursed shame and disgrace to put an old soldier into such an employment. However, the best way not to be plagued with questions is, not to be able to answer ’em, eh? And so I’ll just take myself off, and leave you to chat together for an hour! because you know, ma’amselle, you are ‘a trusty person, of my own household, eh?’” and without further ceremony, he retired through the archway, banged the iron-door close, turned the lock, replaced the bolts, and went whistling up the steps, well satisfied with his morning’s work.

Isabella was, for a moment, startled at the singular situation in which she so unexpectedly found herself; but it was *only* for a

moment. She was with Charles Randolph's friend, one with whom *he* had often talked of *her*, and their conversation became soon as unreserved and confidential as though they had been acquainted for years. Snell repeated that he had no doubt Charles was safe in England, before that time; and affirmed that, to his knowledge, he had written several letters to Isabella, and been extremely low spirited at not receiving a reply: "But," he added, "we both attributed the circumstance to the delay and detention which are now, unhappily, so common, of letters addressed to families suspected of what is called heresy. Never, for an instant, has my friend doubted that you would have relieved his anxiety, had it been in your power."

"Generous and kind Charles!" she exclaimed. "He did me but justice;" and then, for a minute, she sank into a reverie, and upbraided herself for certain fancies which had, latterly, obtruded upon her imagination.

She then asked a thousand questions, to

which the prisoner replied in the best manner he was able; and the sum and substance of his answers (for it would occupy too much space to give them in detail) were as follows: That the Randolph family had resolved to retire beyond the seas, out of the reach of persecution—that Charles had accompanied his father to England, where his younger brother (formerly a manufacturer of fine woollen cloths at Ghent) had established himself two years before; and, as his art was unknown in that country, from whence the Flemish were in the habit of importing wool, he was realizing a rapid fortune, at the same time that he was in the full enjoyment of liberty of conscience. Charles and his father both witnessed and appreciated these advantages, and the latter was supposed to have undertaken the advance of money to increase his brother's establishment. The son, however, returned alone, and was busily engaged in the sale of various property when at Brussels, from whence he was summoned into Holland for the

same purpose, at the moment when he was about to visit Valenciennes—and a little calculation was necessary to ascertain that the disastrous events in that city must have occurred while he was in the north.

When Van Laret made his appearance, Isabella could not believe that the hour had so soon passed away; but he was peremptory, as he expected Momper every minute. Entreaty was useless, he said, unless she would give up the idea of ever visiting the prisoner again; yet, if she would go immediately, there could be no difficulty in returning to-morrow at the same hour. She therefore complied, reproaching herself much that she had never inquired into the cause of Snell's confinement. All her thoughts had been absorbed in one subject, and he had too much delicacy to intrude any other upon her attention.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME days elapsed ere Isabella was again allowed to visit the prisoner. The constant presence of his steward, whom Van Laret represented as a hard-hearted man, was the plea for this delay; during which he strove, by every means in his power, to win the good opinion of his fair guest.

"I little thought, ma'amselle," he said, "when they put me into possession of this castle, that ever such services as that would have been required of me, or I never would have come here—not I. If it was not for the terrible expense of courts martial, and the lawyers' fees, and the advocates, and all them sort of gentry, by St. Jago I'd soon let the bird slip out of the cage: but we soldiers are badly

paid, and, as it is, I can but just make both ends meet. I should be acquitted, I know, *at last*, because my brother officers would feel that I never ought to have been put on such a duty: but what then? Why, I should just be as clean shorn as a young lamb, by the confounded law expenses, and be turned adrift, with nothing but my sword to make my way with up hill again, just as I could;—and let me tell you, ma'amselle, at my time of life, that's no joke, I promise you."

The prisoner's account of the very kind manner in which he had been treated, tended much more than any thing the governor could otherwise have said to remove the antipathy which Isabella had conceived against him, and for which she felt she could assign no sufficient reason. His representations did not therefore fail to produce an effect on her mind, and she resolved to communicate the state of his feelings to Snell, at their next interview, with the hope that, as pecuniary considerations alone

stood between him and liberty, a satisfactory arrangement might be concluded.

At length, she was again admitted to the tower, and Van Laret left her alone with the prisoner, after taking the usual precautions of locking and bolting the iron door; but, instead of returning into the castle, he now ascended to a room above, the way to which he had employed himself in clearing of the stones and rubbish which had been accumulating for years. A floor of boards, the common mode of dividing round towers, alone separated the two apartments, and was sufficiently decayed and open to enable him to hear distinctly every word spoken in the chamber below, as he sat on the upper step which formed the threshold of the door.

The prisoner's tale was one of every day occurrence at that period. His parents had resolved on emigration; and having made every preparation for that purpose, had summoned him to join them at Diest, from whence they intended to make their way to the Rhine,

and so to Munster, in Westphalia, where, as in most parts of the north of Germany, the Flemish refugees were already in considerable numbers. He was taken on the road, and as nothing could be proved against him on the score of heresy, was remanded, and eventually brought to his present place of confinement, as he supposed, because he was the eldest son of a family which had violated the laws in force against emigration. His anxiety on his parents' account was, of course, excessive, not having been able to obtain any tidings of them since his apprehension.

To liberate Charles Randolph's friend, Isabella would have given any sum; but she knew nothing of her own means, for it was but too likely that all her father's available property had been seized by government, in conformity with the law which declared all the effects of heretics to be confiscated. Yet Monsieur Andelot had told her not to make herself uneasy respecting such matters, and, therefore, she hoped, through him, to raise

whatever might be necessary. She had, however, in gold and silver pieces, a sum amounting to nearly a hundred ducats, given to her by her late father during his imprisonment. Was it probable that that would be sufficient to indemnify the governor against the consequences of a legal process? The prisoner steadily refused to profit by her generosity, urging, that as he knew not the fate of his family, it was impossible that he could promise to repay her; and when pressed more strongly by Isabella to accept, in the name of his friend, of a sum which could not at present be of any service to her, as her guardian paid all her expenses, he, unfortunately, told her, that if he had confidence in his own means of repayment, he had far more about his person than could possibly be requisite for the desired purpose.

“This common looking leathern belt,” he continued, unbuckling it from his waist, and placing it in Isabella’s hands, as an evidence that he was not deceiving her, “is lined with

pieces of Spanish gold, the property of one now in a foreign land, and who," he added, with a sigh, "I fear may there stand much in need of them?"

"And that," exclaimed Isabella, "surely ought to be an additional reason for you to endeavour to recover your freedom." It was evident this observation affected the prisoner deeply, for he sat silent for sometime, as though contemplating a distant and imaginary scene. "For the sake of your parents!—for the sake of the friend who has entrusted you! I entreat you to accept of my offer!" she continued; "nay, you can have no scruples now, for your friend, when you deliver him his property, will gladly pay the expense necessary for its conveyance. Come, come!" she added, in a gay tone of voice, "you are not now acting for yourself. I shall not trust *you*, because you say you can't pay me. I'll dispose of my money better. I'll lend it to your friend, who I know can pay; and so there's no more to be

said about it; but I shall talk to the governor directly, or bring you the money to-morrow. No—I'll speak to the governor myself. I shall not trust you. He is a kind-hearted man, and I know wishes you were gone."

"Generous and kind creature!" exclaimed Snell; "well might Charles speak as he used to do of you! But, indeed, indeed, I cannot consent. Your own situation is precarious; and if—if—you should stand in need! Oh, no, not for a moment can I allow you to suppose——"

Here he was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Van Laret, who hastily drew back the bolts and opened the door, and, with an aspect of alarm, told Isabella she must retire instantly, as the steward had unexpectedly returned, and was now crossing the bridge. "Not a word, not a word!" he exclaimed, "we must run for it, or we shall hardly be in time as it is."

Nothing could be more opportune, Isabella thought, than this interruption; and, in obe-

dience to the summons, she ran lightly up the steps of the prison, for she was light at heart: and, as soon as she reached her own apartment, she threw herself on her knees, and thanked heaven for having bestowed upon her the means of serving a fellow-creature.

The alarm which Van Laret had given, was, as usual, but a feint to forward his own ends. The discovery of the belt lined with gold was, to him, like a vein of the precious metal to the speculating miner; but the turn which the conversation subsequently took was by no means so satisfactory, until Isabella expressed her resolution to talk to him on the subject; and then, thinking that the sooner the conference was broken up, the more likelihood there was of his purposes being answered, he descended from his post with more than usual rapidity.

As if by accident, he passed that afternoon by a window in which Isabella was seated, and was well pleased to receive an invitation to walk in; but, once more little Elinor was in his way,

and, accustomed to have the child always with her, Isabella had not at the moment thought of her presence, of which, however, she was soon reminded by her visitor. The usual recommendation of a game at romps with Fido in the court-yard, had not, in the present instance, the desired effect. Elinor seemed resolved to stay where she was; and, at length, after several fruitless attempts to get rid of her, Isabella said, "Well, my dear, if you won't leave us, we must leave you; for I have something very particular to say to the governor which you are not old enough to understand," and she arose with the purpose of going into an adjoining room.

"Oh, Isabella!" cried the child, "but I *do* understand all about it. Go along, you wicked creature!" she continued, pushing Van Laret, who muttered a deep oath between his teeth, and looked suspiciously at Isabella, as if to inquire if she had really been such a fool as to entrust their secret with a child.

"What can you mean, Elinor?" she inquired.

“ Oh, I know what I mean,” was the reply. “ You think I’ve forgot that you used to send me away to play with Fido, whenever Charles Randolph used to come to see you, because you’d something *particular* to say to him. Oh, Isabella, I couldn’t have thought you’d have been so wicked ! But I know now why you told me the governor was a very kind-hearted man, though he did look so cross ; and I know why he comes here so often now, as he never used to do before ; but I won’t—no, *that* I won’t—you never *shall* have any body else but Charles Randolph, I’m determined.”

Isabella was too much confused to stop the little chatterer ; but Van Laret’s behaviour very soon had that effect ; for, holding his sides with his arms “ a kimbo,” he threw himself into a chair, and gave way to a most immoderate fit of laughter. Nothing is more annoying to juvenile precosity than such a mode of treatment. Poor Elinor looked astonished—then bit her lips—and then went into a corner, and sat down and burst into tears.

Isabella felt it was not in her power to be angry with the little amazonian defender of Charles Randolph, and, as she likewise was "determined she never *would* have any body else," she went and knelt down by poor Elinor, and scrupled not to whisper that determination in her ear, with the assurance that the business on which she wished to speak with the governor was, altogether, of a different nature. So, after a very short time, the little monitor's tears were dried up, and she left the room, though not without casting an angry glance of offended pride at Van Laret, who, as soon as the door was closed, begged pardon for his unseemly mirth.

"But burn me! ma'amselle," said he, "if I could help it. At first I thought mother Bhlum had been talking to the child, like an old fool as she is: it was high time we got rid of her."

As this appeared to be a good opportunity of obtaining information on a subject which some-

what perplexed her, Isabella ventured to observe, that as far as she could judge, his conduct to that poor woman seemed scarcely in accordance with the humanity which he had displayed and expressed towards his prisoner.

"Why," said Van Laret, "really I don't know—she was never exposed to any ill-treatment that I am aware of, except for a few minutes in that foolish business about the hop-pole, and that she brought upon herself."

"But," asked Isabella, while an arch smile played upon her lips, "what say you to that affair of her grandfather?"

The governor saw plainly that the truth was suspected, if not positively discovered; and, therefore, as there now appeared to be no reason for concealment, and he wished to stand well in Isabella's opinion, he forced a smile likewise, and answered the question, by asking what reason she could possibly have for supposing that he had any hand in that affair?

"You paid me a compliment one day," re-

plied Isabella, goodhumouredly, "by saying that I could 'put that and that together.' So, when the poor woman told me her tale, she described the dress and trappings of the ghost; and she had scarcely left the room, when Fido brought in a rope, which, in spite of his mouthing it, seemed to have been used for some such display. So I 'put that and that together.'"

"Capital!" exclaimed Van Laret, who inwardly cursed the dog; "capital! Well, you see, ma'amselle, I was always fond of a joke; and so, as that plaguy old woman would be poking her nose into every hole and corner of the castle, thinks I, 'What's to be done, now I've got a prisoner?' So I consulted with my steward Momper, and he was for turning her away; but, says I, 'No, I don't like turning old servants away.' It's a hard case, ma'amselle, to send a poor old body like her upon the wide world to earn her bread, and I couldn't bear the dea of it."

"Your humanity was very commendable," observed Isabella.

"Well," continued Van Laret, rubbing his hands in high glee, "the business was, what to do to get her out of the way for some time. So we hit upon that scheme, and I shouldn't wonder if the journey did her a great deal of good. There's nothing like exercise and change of air, they say—particularly for people that have been long moped up in one place, as she has been. And, after all, there's no harm done, and, perhaps, some good; for I've directed her to a place where there was fighting enough some years ago; and so, no doubt, she'll find somebody's bones, and then the masses, mayhap, may not be thrown away."

As he uttered the last words, there was a marked and extraordinary change in his tone and manner; and, when he had concluded, he sate, with his eyes fixed gloomily on the ground, as a cold shudder seemed to be passing over him. An expression of indescribable horror

overspread his countenance ; and Isabella, who never before witnessed any thing so revolting, shrank involuntarily away from him with alarm. The slight movement she made in so doing served to rouse him from his reverie, and, casting a hurried and bewildered glance upon her, he arose, pressed his hand to his forehead, and rapidly paced the room to and fro.

“ You are unwell,” said Isabella, in a kind, commiserating tone, which had the effect of suddenly arresting his career. He turned, and looked upon her anxious and expressive countenance, and strove to smile—but the effort was a bitter mockery. There was wine standing in a recess. He walked up to it—filled and emptied a tumbler, and then returned to his seat.

“ I fear I have alarmed you,” he resumed.

“ You did, indeed !” replied Isabella ; “ I feared that you were unwell.”

“ No,” said Van Laret, “ no, it was only the recollection of that—— you must know, ma’am-

selle, we soldiers, in war time, see strange sights—such as will not bear thinking of—and sometimes—sometimes the recollection comes suddenly—aye, by all that's infernal! like a clap of thunder, or a flash of lightning. And so it was, just now, when I spoke of—I must take another glass of wine."

"Give me leave," said Isabella, springing across the room, and, instantly returning with the flask, she filled him a tumbler, which he seized and swallowed greedily, as if parched with thirst.

"Thank you, thank you, mademoiselle," he then exclaimed, "it's all over now—all over; and I was a fool to forget myself as I did. But I trust you'll not think any thing about it."

"Indeed," replied Isabella, "I shall often think of it; and a brave man surely need not be ashamed of possessing the feelings of humanity, though wars and oppression sometimes appear to have driven them from the face of the earth."

"True, true, ma'amselle," observed Van Laret, not a little pleased to find his weakness so favourably interpreted. "One can't help thinking sometimes of one's old companions. At least, I can't. However, 'there's a time for all things,' as the saying goes; and so, let's see, what we were talking about? Oh—old mother Bhlum. Well—she's enjoying herself, I dare say, and I'm rid of a great plague—and she may come back again when the prisoner's gone, if she will, for the cook can do nothing properly without her; and the prisoner can't stay here for ever, that's certain. It would never have done to have kept her here with him; for the castle's full of your little secret passages, which I'll be bound to say she knows better than any one else. I've stopped up half a hundred of them at least."

"But the prisoner?" said Isabella.

"Aye, the prisoner," resumed the governor. "I understand there's a new sort of viceroy, or regent, or whatever they call it, come now from

Spain, with more power than ever, and that he makes short work of it. They call him the Duke of Alva, and he's brought an army with him; and, if he goes on as he has begun, he'll soon empty all the prisons, and fill 'em again too, I'm thinking."

This information effected the purpose intended, by making Isabella more anxious than ever for the release of Snell. But, as her means and plan are already known to the reader, it is only necessary to state that she produced them; and Van Laret, after many scruples, agreed to take her little all, in *part* of payment for the anticipated legal expenses, provided she would pass her word to make up the rest at a future time, and use all her influence with Monsieur Andelot; to shield him from the consequences of a charge involving remissness in his military duty.

"I have known one advocate take more than this," he said, throwing the purse into the air, and catching it again; "aye, and for a single

speech too, which, after all, did'nt do any body any good. Oh! they're a confounded set! When once they get hold of a man, it's no easy matter for him to get out of their clutches, I promise ye. But, however, ma'amselle, when Gerard Van Laret once says he'll do a thing, you may depend upon it that it *shall* be done—that's all?" And with this assertion which he corroborated by placing his hand on his breast, he took leave.

Some have asserted that dogs, though placed below man in the scale of creation, have, on particular occasions, evinced a species of foreknowledge respecting coming events, which is utterly denied to the human race. We have no need, however, for this theory, in order to account for Fido's occasionally playing the truant, and sometimes absenting himself from the comforts of his new quarters. The fact was, that they were too cosy and snug for him to continue in always, and he had a keen relish for the pure fresh air of the forest, and the

delights of liberty; besides which he had not yet forgotten that he came to the castle with a master, and that the horse he rode was yet in the stable. His attachment to Isabella and Elinor was very great; but perhaps their presence, jarring the organ of memory (which dogs have, or ought to have, developed somewhere in a very great degree), made him conclude that some one else, whom he valued yet more highly, could not be far distant. One or all these causes combined, perhaps, with others of a more occult nature, had rendered him latterly so much of a rover, that he would sometimes be missing for the whole night: and as he was now considered to be Isabella's property, no one took notice of his conduct. He came in and went out just as he thought fit, and was altogether left to follow his own devices.

Such was the state of things when Van Laret visited the prisoner, and told him of the arrangement which he had made with Isabella. Snell strongly protested against taking advan-

tage of her generosity, and affirmed, that as he was innocent of any crime, he must, according to the usual course of law, be soon set at liberty.

To this Van Laret replied, that innocence was not, in the present temper and spirit of the government, a sufficient security for either property or life. He represented that he himself was not actuated by pecuniary motives, as the sum which he received was scarcely a tithe of what he might fairly calculate upon having to pay; but avowed that he felt disgusted at the nature of the employment which he was called upon to practise, to say nothing of the gratification he must feel in restoring an innocent person to liberty. After some farther conversation it was proposed by Snell, that Van Laret should return Isabella her property, and take his bond of indemnity for the amount of the alleged legal expenses, which he affirmed would be duly honoured by a person of very high station in the country, a nobleman of elevated rank and great wealth, in case he himself should not be

able to meet the demand at the proper time. This sounded well in the governor's ears; for he loved to have dealings of any sort with persons of high rank and influence, in approaching whom he ever calculated on the probability of deriving some advantage. But when he asked the name of the nobleman in question, and the prisoner, after some hesitation, said, "It is the Prince of Orange," he gave a long significant whistle: "Whew—ew—ew!" he cried. "Why, he's run the country they say, and never likely to come back any more, unless he comes back as a rebel in arms, and that he won't do now, methinks, as we've got a fighting regent, or whatever they may call the Duke; for he's Judge, President, General, and pretty near every thing. So the Prince of Orange and his party will take precious good care to keep out of his way, I'm thinking. No, no, that'll never do, master."

"Do you know where the Prince is now?" asked Snell, eagerly.

"Why, not exactly," replied Van Laret. "He was in Nassau; but they *do* say now he is farther northward, trying to recruit men for some purpose or other."

After receiving this information, the prisoner seemed as anxious to be gone as he had previously been backward in acceding to the proposed arrangements. "Aha!" thought Van Laret, "I smell treason here! So all's fair *now*, at all events;" and then he addressed the prisoner as follows: "I'll tell you what, master; when I once begin with a thing, I like to go through with it, and not stand shilly shallying about trifles. Now I take you, from what I have seen, to be a man of honour, as well as from what Ma'amselle Isabella says. I don't think you'd fly from your word. So, as for bonds and all that, why you see we must go to the lawyers again for them; and *they* always contrive to leave some loophole or other for a man to get out at, provided he is a rogue. I know that well enough. So, if you'll just pass me

your word, that you'll bear me harmless through this business, that is, as far as money goes, why, I'll take my chance of the rest, and so the business will be settled, and you may just say 'good bye' to your present quarters as soon as you like."

"In taking my word," replied Snell, "you must likewise take into consideration the probability of my being able to fulfil what I engage; and I must tell you candidly, that if the Prince of Orange is in difficulty, it will scarcely be in my power to raise any considerable sum, perhaps for years, as my father has entrusted the principal part of his fortune to the Prince on mortgages."

"A precious security!" exclaimed Van Laret. "I should recommend him to sell the parchments for what he can get, for the estates will soon be confiscated, that's certain. The new governor makes short work of it, I promise you. He's thrown the Counts Egmont and Horn into limbo, they say—and the old regent, that was

at the head of all before, has now got her master * at last; for she daren't say her

* The Duke of Alva, by commissions from King Philip, had the unrestricted command of the army; was appointed president of the three councils, of state, of justice, and of the finances; and endowed with full power to punish or to pardon crimes of every sort, as he should judge to be expedient.

His first public measure was to allow the reformers a month for leaving the country, while secretly, he commanded the inquisitors to proceed rigorously in enforcing the edicts against them. Then he established the council of tumults (called by the Flemings, the council of blood), to search after and punish all who had been concerned in the late disturbances, directly or indirectly. Of this tribunal he likewise assumed the presidency, his place, when absent, being filled by Vargas, a Spanish lawyer, who "distinguished himself above all his countrymen by his avarice and cruelty." The inferior members were twelve, the greater proportion Spaniards, and one of their first deeds was to declare, "That, to have presented or subscribed any petition against the late erection of bishops, or against the edicts or inquisition, or to have permitted the exercise of the new religion under any pretence whatever, or to insinuate by word of mouth or writing, that the King has no right to abolish those pretended privileges which have been the source of so much impiety, is treason against the King, and justly merits the severest punishments he shall be pleased to inflict." This was the prelude to the bloody scenes which followed, and which, in detail, would be far too horrible for our pages.

Besides upwards of a hundred thousand who had emigrated

soul's her own, and is going to be sent back to Spain."

"The Count Egmont in prison!" the prisoner cried. "Impossible! No man could be more active than he was in the King's service, and his conduct was publicly applauded by the government."

"Be that as it may," replied Van Laret; the duke has arrested him, and he's in snug quarters somewhere, with his friend; for there was no room for them in the prisons at Brussels. However, that's not our business—but, as I was saying, when I once begin, I like to go through with a thing; and so I'll take your word and stand all chances; for, after all, the Prince of Orange is a long-headed fellow and a

previously, more than twenty thousand persons escaped at this time into England, France, and the Protestant states of Germany; but great numbers were prevented—there was no distinction of age, or sex, or condition, and "in the space of a few months, upwards of eighteen hundred persons suffered by the hands of the executioner, yet the Duke of Alva's thirst of blood was not satiated." The work, he said, was going on too slowly.

good soldier, that I will say of him; and perhaps he may contrive to keep his head on his shoulders, in spite of 'em all."

The prisoner expressed his gratitude. And then the means of escape were so planned as to make it appear, if possible, that the vigilance of the governor had been outwitted.

Isabella had a parting interview with Snell, in which he promised to send her the first intelligence he should obtain respecting his friend; and it was agreed that his letters should, for security sake, be addressed to Van Laret.—Snell then spoke freely of public matters, and avowed his intention of joining the Prince of Orange, in case that nobleman succeeded in raising troops, and deemed that there was a probability of regaining the liberty of their country. Isabella shuddered at the idea of a civil war; and hoped that, as the number of reformers was now so very great, the government would perceive how injurious a continuance of persecution must prove to the na-

tional interest, and allow liberty of conscience to all. She concluded by observing, that if, unhappily, a conflict should take place, she could not believe that Heaven would allow the oppressors to triumph; and assured him, that her earnest good wishes would attend him, and her fervent prayers should be offered up for the success of the righteous cause to which he was about to devote himself.

And thus, as a listener, Van Laret discovered that he had two heretics beneath his roof; and, when their interview was at an end, he went his way, to ruminate in what manner he could best use the discovery for his own advantage.

CHAPTER VII.

"WHAT time does the moon go down to-night?" asked Van Laret of his companion, as they sat at dinner.

"Twenty-one minutes eighteen seconds past eleven o'clock," replied Momper; "but I mean to be at Liege long before that time, and fast asleep, mayhap, if Weinbruer doesn't entice me to make a night of it, as he did last time I went to pay his bill. The fellow has got such a way with him, bringing different sorts of old wines out of odd holes and corners, and telling one, seriously, that it is the very last bottle, or the last bottle but one, and the other must be kept till the day his daughter is married, and so on."

"Aye, aye! I know his way," said the governor: "and, by St. Jago! I think I'll go and pay the next bill myself, just for the fun of the thing. But they seem to be so infernally strict since the new regent's come, that I suppose it would be next to high treason now to leave one's post for a night, particularly as we've a prisoner in the castle. By-the-bye, you'll take care and see all's right there before you go."

"Trust me for that!" replied Momper: "Unless he can nibble his way through stone walls, like a mouse out of a cheese, he's safe enough, I'll warrant."

"No doubt, no doubt!" observed Van Laret. "But, I say, Momper, my good fellow, remember what I told you. Pay Weinbruer the hundred ducats first. [This was Isabella's money]. Mind, pay him that *first*, and then be *persuaded* to buy a butt or so of good old Hocheimer, before he begins to *kumbug* you with his little odds and ends; for, after that, by St. Jago! he'll bother a fellow's taste in such a

way, that he'll not know the difference between Zeltinger and Johannisberg."

"Never fear! never fear!" said Momper; "I'm up to his tricks, I promise ye."

"Well, well!" continued the governor; "I will say this for you, you've as clean a taste as any fellow I ever knew till you've taken a certain quantity, and then, hang me! if I think it's of any consequence what's put before you."

"You're about right," replied Momper, laughing; "and I know more than one that's pretty much the same. I finished off the priest the other night with a flask of Casellar, just dashed with Hocheimer, and passed it off for a doubtful sort, which we didn't *exactly* know whether to call Johannisberg or Markbrunner."

"Well! and what did he say?" asked Van Laret. "But it's very strange! I don't recollect any thing about the matter. I suppose I must have been done up; eh?"

“Why! not exactly,” replied Momper.—
“You were only nodding a little; for Master Pius had got talking about the duty of attending mass, and how particular we ought to be in these times of heresy, and especially how cautious the clergy should be in their conduct, and set an example of order and sobriety, and all the rest of it, as he usually does when he’s had enough. So, says I to myself, begging his reverence’s pardon, ‘what’s the use of throwing pearls before swine?’”

“Well! and what did he pronounce it to be?” said Van Laret.

“Why,” answered Momper, “he first said it was Johannisberg; and then drank another glass, and said it was Scharsberger; and then another, and vowed it was capital Markebrunner; and then changed his mind, and thought it a particularly fine vintage of Rudesheimer; and so on, till he’d fairly emptied the flask; and then he said he thought it was high time to say good night; and so it was, for I was obliged to

send a man with him, or he'd have made a short cut down the hill."

Such were the scenes which Isabella's little all was destined to support a continuance of. Master and man laughed heartily at the idea of outwitting the priest, and the former vowed they must have another flask before they parted, as he found himself a cup too low.

When the evening came, a dreary autumnal evening at the close of October, Van Laret proceeded to execute his plans, during the absence of his steward. Furnished with a rope-ladder, which was to be the means of the prisoner's escape, he left his own apartment, passed through that of Momper, and was proceeding towards the south western tower, when he stopped to look out at the only window in the corridor through which it was possible for a man's body to pass. "Yes," he muttered to himself, "that's the way he must go. He's but light, and when he once gets on the rook-shooter's walk, he'll

find his way well enough round to the main entrance. To be sure that ledge down below looks a little awkward, and as for the patch of green-sward, I don't think it's any thing more than old roots; but I dare say he'll do very well—and, if not, why we must pick him up in the morning, that's all. Only then there'd be a noise about his body in the castle and neighbourhood, and that young hussey is in the secret about the belt. I've half a mind to let him out by the sally-port. No; that won't do; for we must pass through the armoury, and hang me if I care to trust him there. No, no, he must take his chance, and if he falls, I must be stirring early in the morning."

After this soliloquy, he went to the prisoner's apartment, from whence they proceeded together to the upper chamber, and easily broke one or two of the old flooring-boards, leaving a hole, by which it should seem that Snell had escaped. The next step was to adjust a fragment of the planks across the in-

side of the small window in the corridor, in such a manner as to support the rope-ladder; and when all these preparations were made, Van Laret proceeded to give instructions relative to the prisoner's route. "You must wait patiently," said he, "till the moon's well down, and then all will be safe. You'll find your first footing a little ticklish, mayhap, so don't let go the ladder all of a sudden; but hold on a bit, and then you'll find, just below, to your right, a ledge of the rock that's firm enough. Well, just under that is our rook-shooting path, which is all sound, only narrow in places; well, keep bearing always with your right hand against the rocks, and mind and don't stumble over the old roots, and stoop now and then, and you'll come out just under one of the barbican towers. Well, then you'll have nothing to do but come straight along the causeway, and pass over the ravine bridge, and so on right into the forest, down the hill, keeping the causeway, mind me, for there are some devilish holes on each side,

till you've got well into the valley; then, turn sharp to the left, and you'll soon come to the river, and, after that, why I won't ask you which way may you mean to go. In the meanwhile I shall go to my own room as usual, and so you may depend upon it my people will be all snug enough before you begin to move. But mind; you let the moon be *well* down, for your moonlight shadows are sad tell-tales." He then, with much apparent cordiality, shook hands with his prisoner, and wished him a pleasant and safe journey, and success in his future undertakings.

Though Snell would have preferred a less intricate and safer exit from the castle, liberty was too alluring in prospect to allow of any hesitation; nevertheless, while waiting wearily for the moon's decline, he could not help feeling that he had yet something to accomplish, as he looked down upon the precipice, and in vain sought to descry a trace of the path he had to follow. Nothing was to be seen but projecting

craggs, from which huge masses of ivy hung, swinging in the breeze, or clung, matted firmly round, in vigorous maturity; while, here and there, a stunted oak thrust forth its crooked arms from its prison in the clefts of the rock.

At length the moon disappeared behind a mass of streaky clouds, which seemed mingled with the horizon. A faint glimmering, or gloaming, of light alone remained, and the prisoner summoned his resolution for the hazardous descent. At the foot of the ladder he found indeed that there was no resting place—the crumbling dry earth gave way beneath his tread, and went showering and rattling down the abyss, giving fearful notice of the depth beneath, as, after a prolonged silence, it struck upon the distant foliage of the valley. But the projecting ledge, which Van Laret had described, was now visible, about six feet below where he hung suspended; and, after a few moment's hesitation, he hit upon an expedient, by which, with much toil, he contrived to reach it in safety. Ascending the

ladder, after having ascertained that one of the ropes, which composed its sides, was more than sufficient to support his weight, he cut away the other, step, by step, as he descended, and then, by tying them together, obtained the means of letting himself down several feet lower, and thus, at length, stood firm upon the rock. The task of finding his way round the entrance gate appeared now more bewildering than what he had already accomplished; for the path, if it deserved such a name, was utterly indistinguishable amid the darkness in which every thing was already shrouded. Here and there he fancied he was treading where human footsteps might have trod before; but, the moment after, all trace was lost, and tangled vegetation barred his progress. At last, after much fatigue and danger, he found himself upon a clear level spot, some yards in extent, about which the fantastic projections of the rock formed a rude sort of crescent, while others hung fearfully beetling overhead. Here he threw himself down, and

had just made up his mind to await the slow coming of the dawn when he heard a rustling among the leaves some few yards below. Starting up, he listened with an indefinite apprehension of the presence of wolves or bears, but all remained silent for a few seconds, and then a similar noise proceeded from a spot more to the left, in the direction which he had traversed—a moment after there was heard a short gruff bark—then a low whining, and the agitation among the leaves increased. Whatever the creature might be, it was evident now to Snell that his presence was discovered. He started, therefore, on his legs, to prepare for acting on the defensive; but his suspense was not of long duration; for, hurried and panting, a huge animal came bounding upon the floor of his retreat, and was instantly recognised by the fugitive. It would be difficult to say whether the joy of Fido or his master was the most excessive: the “dumb” animal, assuredly, made most noise on the occasion, and thereby excited a degree of alarm in

the mind of his newly-recovered protector, lest the unusual sounds should attract notice in the castle. And they were heard and canvassed within it by certain of the wakeful guardians, among whom, luckily, Momper was not. These fellows decided that it was "the young lady's great big dog again," and wondered what he had "found out now;" but, as they knew not that there was a prisoner confined within their walls, they, of course, could have no suspicion of what was really going forward.

After what has been said of Fido's nocturnal rambles, the reader will scarcely be surprised to hear that he was perfectly competent to conduct his master along the rook-shooter's path—a task which he performed with all the extraordinary sagacity of his kind—going forward and returning, and then advancing and waiting, till convinced that his steps were followed—leaping to and fro, wherever there was a chasm to be passed, lest it might escape notice—and blocking up the way, and even using his teeth to pull his

master back, when about to take a wrong direction. In this manner they soon arrived before the main entrance of the castle, when all intricacies seemed to be at an end, and they passed rapidly forward, down hill, along the causeway, over the ravine bridge, and so on, toward the valley, the gloom gradually deepening as they descended into the lower ground among the lofty trees of the forest. As they entered the turn which was to conduct them to the river side, Fido ran forward, and gave a short bark, and then returned immediately, and kept close to his master, who, shortly after, thought he perceived a figure moving in the road before him. A few more paces served to convince him that he was not mistaken, and advancing nearer, he accosted the stranger, who replied immediately, in a hoarse voice, using the uncouth dialect of the country, that he was a poor man out of employ, but that he had heard of a place at Beaufort, on the road to Liege; and so, as he couldn't afford to lose a day, and

knew the country well, he thought he should be able to get there in time to have a nap before he went to work. "The worst of it is," said he, coughing, "I've got such a terrible bad cold that I can hardly speak."

"I am going that way likewise," observed Snell, "so we shall be company for each other."

"Poor company I shall be," replied the man, "with this cursed cold, that makes me as hoarse as a raven," and again he coughed violently.

They proceeded onward together for some time, the countryman always answering as briefly as possible to the questions put to him, and still complaining of his cold. The river now became clearly visible before them, as they looked from under the dark conopy of the forest; and they were about to pass into the open space along its banks, when Snell felt himself suddenly seized by the collar, as his companion resolutely demanded his money. The grasp was so firm, and made with such skill, as to render his

struggles to disengage himself perfectly ineffectual. Fido growled, but did not appear disposed to take any other part in the fray. His growling was, however, sufficient to recal his presence to Snell's recollection, and he vehemently called out, "Seize him, Fido!" The animal instantly sprang at the throat of the assailant, and soon forced him to let go his hold of Snell; but the moment after, his antagonist cried out, in a voice of authority, "Down, Snarler, down!" and the bewildered brute, accustomed to obey that tone of command, immediately released him.

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed Snell; "yes, I know you now."

"You do, do you?" exclaimed Van Laret; "then, take that!" and he discharged a pistol at his victim, who instantly fell prostrate on the ground. The rage of poor Fido now knew no bounds; he flew upon the governor, who fired his remaining pistol, happily, without effect; and a long and desperate conflict ensued, in

which the superior strength of the man at last proved victorious. Grasping the animal's neck with both hands, he succeeded in stopping his breathing, and when all struggling was at an end, he hurled the inanimate carcass from him, into a pit by the road side. He then proceeded to unbuckle the belt from the body of Snell, which he rudely kicked, in order to ascertain that life was actually extinct. But there was no motion, and all remained silent; and the villain went his way, perfectly satisfied that his purpose was accomplished, after a resistance upon which he had not calculated.

"Curse the dog!" he muttered; "who could have supposed he had so much strength? It's the first time I ever had a battle of that kind, and I can feel I've not come off without some marks. Humph! how shall I account for them? Must hide 'em, if possible; but my hands? Pshaw!—shall make up some tale, when I get home, before to-morrow."

With such soliloquies, but without the smallest

tinge of remorse, Van Laret occupied himself on his return home, into which he entered by the sally-port, a small door-way, hidden by brambles, and opening into the ravine, nearly under the bridge already described. From thence it communicated with the interior of the castle, by a passage cut through the rock. On reaching his chamber, he was long occupied in washing and dressing his wounds—a task which he found even more irksome and painful than he had anticipated; for Fido had indeed done his duty, and left deep and enduring marks of his fury, some of which were destined to accompany his antagonist to the grave.

When this process was finished, the governor of the castle threw himself upon his couch, and, after glutting his eyes with an examination of his dearly-purchased treasure, began to ruminate on the steps which it would now be proper for him to take. The general belief that there were robbers in the forest, would be sufficient to account for the body; and he was well satisfied

that nobody could identify it but himself and Momper.

“There is only one thing to fear,” he said; “and that is, that some officious fool will stumble upon it, and have it brought up here. *That* must be prevented; so I must be stirring early myself, and have it taken to the village, till Momper comes back, and then we’ll have it over to Liege, and give it up to the magistrate; and, dead or alive, as he was a heretic, it can’t signify much now, so long as one does but give a good account of one’s prisoner. And I’ll be bound for it that Momper will make up a plausible tale to save himself.”

During these reflections and his previous occupation, Van Laret had not omitted to refresh himself somewhat freely from a large flask of wine which stood by his side; and whether from that cause, the loss of blood, or the fatigue he had undergone, or the whole, united with the lateness of the hour when he fell asleep, it so happened that, in spite of his previous reso-

lution, he did not awake till an hour after day-break. Starting up, he instantly summoned two of his trustiest followers to accompany him on horseback ; but again there was a delay in the stables. His own horses were gone down the hill to water, and a boy was despatched to hasten them back ; and thus, with the ceremonies of rubbing down, saddling, and bridling, another half hour was lost, during which he walked to and fro in his room, agitated with impatience which he dared not exhibit, lest it might lead his men to suspect, hereafter, that he had some previous knowledge of the scene which he expected to witness. And, ever and anon, he cast a hurried glance toward the ravine bridge, dreading to see a procession of the peasantry bringing up the corpse of his victim, in which case it would scarcely be possible to prevent the circumstance from reaching the ear of Isabella Freron.

All, however, remained quiet, and he contented himself, when leaving the castle, with

giving a gentle reproof to his people for keeping him waiting so long. "Suppose, Govert," said he to one of his companions, as they passed the gate—"suppose that I wanted to go out on a secret expedition, instead of just going to see my friend Winkelman, and take an early breakfast with him, because I've something to say to him, and don't like to be out of the way in the day time, now Momper isn't at home. a pretty business it would be to be kept pretty near an hour waiting for one's horse. You must look to it, Govert, and brush those thieves up."

Govert, of course, agreed that it was too bad; and that certain instances of remissness among the underlings, as old privileged servants sometimes are wont, when they have possession of a master's ear.

As they approached the scene of the preceding night's transactions, Van Laree felt somewhat disconcerted at perceiving the road was clear; but, as they passed the spot, one of his com-

panions observed traces of blood upon the ground, and exclaimed, "Heyday! what have we here?"

"What have you found, Ralph?" asked his master.

"Hang me if I know," replied the man, dismounting; "but it looks confoundedly as if some rough work had been going on last night, for I'll swear there was nothing of the sort here yesterday at sunset."

"Look, and see what you can find there," said Van Laret, "and help him, Govert, will you—but I should rather think," he continued, coolly, "that it is some of the gamekeeper's works; for the peasants would hardly come here at night to practise their rough sports—they're too fond of being looked at by their sweethearts, eh?"

"There's been something more than sport here," observed Govert, seriously. "Here's the print of a man's shoulder and arm, where the

blood's clotted all round. By the Virgin! there's been murder here to my thinking."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Van Laret.

"And look here!" cried Ralph, pointing to the ground at a little distance. "There has been some hard struggling here; though I can't make out more than one footmark in the sand."

"Ha, ha!" shouted the master. "A man wrestling with himself! That's capital, Ralph! Ha, ha! No, no, my lads, it *must* have been the gamekeeper; or, mayhap, some poaching sportsman has contrived to furnish one of your fat burgomasters' tables at my expense. Aye, aye, I see it all now! That stain is where he killed his game; and the other marks are where he tried half a dozen times, before he could get it on his shoulders."

"That *may* be," said Govert, doubtfully, "but I think I could swear to that's being the print of a man's shoulder; for I remember once lying in the same way, one blessed long night

myself, after the battle of Gravelines, and when the doctor came and they sate me upright, I'd nothing to do but to look at my own print in the ground all next day till the waggons came to my turn."

"Well," observed Van Laret, "it *may* be as you say, after all; and, whichever way it is, I shall inquire into the business, you may depend upon it. However, now you are down, you may as well look into the pit—it seems to me as if those bushes had been disturbed. Here, give me your bridles, I'll hold the horses till you've done."

The nature of the ground where they now stood was for some yards very different from the rest of the road, a circumstance which Van Laret had not considered on the preceding night. It was a spot where the water, which escaped from the hills after rain, crossed the thoroughfare, ploughing up the wheel tracks, and spreading the loosened levigated earth on the surface, precisely, upon a small scale, in the

same manner as a river deposits its smooth and shifting sandbanks.

Having possession of the horses, the wretched being endeavoured, by moving them to and fro, to efface the impression of his own footsteps; but his over-anxiety caused him to be baffled in the attempt. What he might possibly have performed with one, he was unable to accomplish with three, for the timid animals shrank from approaching so near the pit; and the more vehemently he urged them, by so much the more their alarm seemed to increase, till, in a short time, he lost all command over them—the reins became crossed, and they stood in different directions so as to render it impossible for him to force them to his purpose, unless he dismounted, and that was a step which he had cogent reasons for avoiding.

“I see nothing,” said Govert, coming out of the pit, “but a few straggling black hairs hanging upon the thorn bushes.”

“It looks as if some beast had tumbled down

there in the mud below," observed Ralph; "but whatever it was, it has contrived to scramble out again, for there are its great foot-marks on the other side, and if there were any lions in this country, I should think it must have been one of them by the size of its paws."

Van Laret could scarcely force a smile, for the escape of Fido caused him serious uneasiness; still he hoped to find that the corpse had been taken to the village, and there he resolved immediately to proceed. "If any thing has really happened," said he to his companions, "you'll be sure to hear of it at the inn; and if it's any thing particular, such as murder, or any thing of that kind, step up to me directly, and I'll come down, and look into the business." After giving these orders, he alighted at the little gate of a private walk, leading to the garden of the parsonage, while his men went forward with the horses into the village.

The welcome which the governor received

from the Reverend Pius Winkelman, was such as retired country parsons usually give to "gentlemen of influence in the county." He was delighted, surprised, considered himself highly honoured, declared it was very kind, very friendly, and so on; but wished he had known a little before, as his establishment was upon so small a scale, that he feared his guest would fare but indifferently.

"No ceremony, no ceremony!" exclaimed Van Laret. "Remember, I'm an old campaigner. You've got some eggs, I dare say, and your old woman will just toast us some rashers of bacon, or a slice or two off one of your hams; and then, with a bottle of your oldest wine, no matter what sort, I shall make a breakfast as good as the regent, or King Philip himself. For appetite's the best sauce, and I have brought that with me. Eh! eh! eh!"

The reverend host appeared to enter fully into the joke, and his old woman did her best; for after serving up the aforesaid eggs and ham,

she contrived an excellent dish of fish, and a huge platter of sour crout, loaded with sausages of her own making, "to follow;" and so, what with cheese, butter, fruit, honey, and preserves as a dessert, the breakfast was such as no moderate man could complain of.

While these matters were going forward at the parsonage, Govert and Ralph proceeded to the village inn, and immediately commenced inquiries relative to the appearances which they had discovered on their way. Nobody, however, knew any thing about the matter; and so, without further delay, the men followed their master's example, and went to breakfast.

Now, among those who overheard their questions, there was one Pieter (or Peter) Bree, a man of multifarious employments, who nevertheless had always sufficient leisure to attend to any "new thing." As such a character is usually to be found in every village, it will not be necessary to describe him very particularly. Let it suffice that he was a compound of Pope's

"P. P. clerk of this parish," and the scarcely less celebrated "Dicky Gossip," of the English stage; and moreover, usually went about in a suit of the parson's worn-out black, and was on the wrong side of fifty. Pieter listened attentively to what passed, as he was demolishing his herring in the chimney corner, and then slunk out silently to his humble tenement, where half-a-dozen ragged boys were waiting to receive his instructions in the mysteries of the "criss-cross row," and the composition of monosyllables. Selecting three favourites, he told the rest to go about their business, an order which schoolboys are generally very prompt in obeying. "And now," said he to the chosen three, "my good lads, I'm just going into the forest a little way for a walk, and expect to find something very extraordinary." This was quite enough to ensure their company; and to say the truth, Pieter did not exactly like the idea of going alone, when there had been a talk of murder. "Moreover,"

he justly argued, "young witnesses are always the best—what they see makes a deeper impression upon them, and their eyes are sharper than mine, because they haven't used them so much." So the master and his pupils went their way, and soon arrived at the designated spot.

Now Pieter, among his other avocations, numbered that of a "repairer of boots and shoes," and was therefore led, professionally, to remark the singularity of the impressions left by those of the persons engaged in the scuffle. They were very large, and very "right and left," and one was worn away on the side of the heel, and the other in the middle of the foot, in a singular manner, as though the wearer had an excrescence of some sort in that place. All these matters were noted upon paper by the inquisitor, together with his opinion, that the "article" was of foreign manufacture; and then, to make all certain, he cut out two patterns in parchment, fitted them to the prints in the sand,

and delineated, in a workmanlike manner, upon each, the peculiar marks thereunto belonging. In the meanwhile, the boys were employed in rummaging about, but they could find nothing, save a few torn rags of coarse woollen cloth, such as the cloaks of the common people were usually composed of. Even these were not deemed too insignificant by Pieter, who carefully wrapped them up, and put them in his pocket; and when all this was accomplished, a slight shower began to fall, upon which he stepped out into the open space to reconnoitre, and being very "weatherwise," declared they must face it as it was, for they were going to have a rainy day.

When Van Lareth had finished his breakfast at the parsonage, he began to feel extremely uneasy at the continued absence of his men, and at last ventured to inquire of his host, if there was "any news in the parish?"

"Not a thing stirring," was the reply. "I believe my flock are all true Catholics, at least,

I know nothing to the contrary; and I dare say I should soon hear if we had any reformers among us, for they seem to make a strange noise in the world now-a-days. Do you think it's true, that the Prince of Orange, and the rest of them, really *can* have the audacity to attempt to oppose the government?"

"Why, after what I have seen," replied Van Laret, "I shouldn't wonder at any thing. But I must be moving, for I expect my steward back presently from Liege, where I sent him yesterday on particular business. Can you send somebody down to the inn, to tell my fellows to come up with the horses?"

"You can't think of going yet!" exclaimed Winkleman. "It has been raining for some time; and look," he continued, going to the window; "it pours, and it's darker yet where the wind blows from."

This intelligence was far from disagreeable to Van Laret, who knew that the descending torrent from the hills must sweep away every

vestige of his crime; but his anxiety respecting the body of his victim increased every moment, and in spite of his efforts to appear as usual, it was evident to his host that something was the matter. Emulating, therefore, the hospitalities of the castle, the good man produced a choice bottle from an odd corner; and, to a certain extent, appeared by it to revive the spirits of his guest, who declared that he was never better, only he believed the gloomy weather made him feel dull; and besides, he wished to get home, in order to meet his steward.

"Take my word for him," said Winkelman, evidently beginning to feel the effect of the wine. "My good friend, Master Momper, knows better than to ride through such a rain as this, unless it's upon a business of life and death. Though I don't know neither, now I come to think of it; for he was boasting to me, the other day, that he'd as lief ride through the forest by night as by day."

"And why not?" asked Van Laret.

"Why not?" exclaimed the priest; "why, because of the wolves, to be sure. They tell me that, when they get together in a pack, they make no more of a man or horse than a fox does of a young gosling, and they always prowl by night. It wasn't a week ago that they carried off two sheep, close by the village."

"What, skins and all?" cried Van Laret.

"All I can say is this," replied Winkelman, "I saw the blood upon the ground, and there was a lock of wool here and there; but the skins were found afterwards, all torn to pieces, at a considerable distance. And then, again, there are the wild boars, and some of our people say they have seen immense bears too; but then they always drag their prey home to their dens, so it must have been the wolves that took the sheep."

"I believe that is the case," observed the governor; "bears do generally drag their prey home—eh?"

"A well known fact in natural history," re-

plied Winkelman, in a tone of authority. "I have myself visited caves where they *formerly* existed, and the number of bones is astonishing. They always drag the carcasses to their dens before they begin to devour them."

"And so enjoy their meals at home—eh?" said Van Laret, catching at this savage gleam of hope; "well, I don't blame them. But are you sure there *are* any bears in the forest?"

"I can bring you witnesses to swear to the fact," was the reply; "but ask your own game-keeper—he can tell as well as anybody."

"Very true, very true," observed the governor; "I'll not forget—I should like to have a bear hunt."

Soon after this the rain ceased for a short time, and as Van Laret was resolved to go home "between the showers," his men were summoned, and he took leave of his host.

When they had cleared the village, he turned towards Govert, and inquired if they had heard any news.

"No," was the answer; "they are all as dull and stupid as usual; there's scarcely one of 'em as ever goes a mile from home. They knew nothing about what we saw on the road, but said they supposed it was the wolves or the bears."

"Humph!" said Van Laret, "that may be. What sort of a paw was that you saw the print of, Ralph—was it like a bear's?"

"Why, I wasn't particular enough to mark that," replied Ralph; "but then I can't say that I ever observed a bear's paw very particularly, though I have seen 'em going about led with a rope."

"Well, well, then ride on first, and look at it again," said his master.

When Van Laret arrived at the spot, Ralph declared that the confounded rain had destroyed every mark, both on the road and in the pit, which was now knee deep in the dirty water. The two then proceeded, without any further occurrence, to the castle.

CHAPTER VIII.

VAN Laret's first task, after his return, was to visit Isabella, and give an account of her friend's safety, which he did in a manner that called forth her most grateful feelings.

"I went with him," he said, "as far as the road was at all intricate; and, after that, it was impossible for him to miss his way. And I'm glad I did go with him too, for this is a terrible country for a stranger to cross; for, after I left him, I thought I'd just come home by a nearer cut, and so blundered upon a pit that I'd never observed before, and down I tumbled, and got scratched preciously among the brambles; however, there were no bones broke, that's one comfort."

Isabella expressed her concern that his hu-

manity should have been the cause of any personal inconvenience to himself, and hoped that the injuries he had received were but slight.

"Oh, nothing, *ma'amselle*," was the magnanimous answer; "a mere flea-bite—nothing at all; and if it had been, why, what should that signify, when compared with the pleasure of setting a worthy young man upon his legs again in the world, instead of being cooped up in a tower like a well. No, no, we old campaigners don't mind a scratch or two."

"I thank God for his escape!" exclaimed Isabella, giving way to the impulse of her proper feelings; "and trust that you will receive the reward of your conduct toward him, both here and hereafter."

There was so much genuine devotion and pathos in the manner and tone in which these words were uttered, and the speaker looked so like one of those beautiful figures which we designate angels, that Van Laret's presence of mind forsook him for a moment; and he felt his

blood run cold within him, as though the ambiguous sentence had been pronounced by one of a superior order of beings, and was meant to be prophetic of his future destiny.

"You are unwell?" exclaimed Isabella, anxiously.

"Not at all—not at all," he replied. "Only I have had a nasty sort of a cold hanging about me lately; and as I haven't been used to be much out of a night of late, and got caught in the wet too this morning, it may be increased a little—that's all. However, you must excuse my hurrying away, ma'amselle, as I've lots of things to attend to now Momper is out; only I thought you'd like to know all was right—eh? So I thought I'd just come and tell you."

He then took his leave, and Isabella's last words at parting expressed a hope that he would not suffer on account of the transactions of the previous night.

"Curse the jade!" he muttered, as he

strode along the gallery to his own apartment. "Her words are like the tolling of a death-knell. By St. Jago! if she wasn't so young and pretty, I should think she had dealings with the devil, and was mocking me, and knew all about the matter. A curse on that young rascally heretic's body! I wish I could once fairly see the wolves or bears mumbling it, and then I should be satisfied!"

Uttering this characteristic ejaculation, he threw himself into a chair; and shortly after Momper made his appearance, wet to the skin.

"Well, here I am!" he cried, in high spirits. "All's right. I've picked out *such* a lot of wine! Wienbruer has a famous stock. There—there's the receipt for the money. We had a jovial night of it, I promise you—but I shall just have time to go and change my dress before dinner, and then I'll tell you all about it."

On his return, and during their meal, he gave a particular account of his proceedings and purchases, which was much to the satisfaction of

both parties, but not worth the trouble of relating here. Then, according to the established routine, the steward prepared to carry the prisoner his daily allowance of provisions, remarking that he had left him enough the day before for two days, in case he should have been detained at Liege.

"Well, well, my good fellow," said Van Laret, "I leave all that to your management; only take care the chap doesn't get out, that's all. By St. Jago! if he was, there'd be the devil to pay, for I've a strong notion that he's one of your unbelieving heretics."

"Get out!" sneered Momper. "Get out—eh? I like that idea, truly. Through an iron door and a stone wall? And then, if he could, I wonder where he'd find wings to fly off the battlements with! But what a burning shame it is to give such a capon as this to a heretic!"

And with this pious observation he took up his load, and went his way, gaily carolling the

fag-end of an old song, while his master endeavoured to rehearse his part for the coming scene.

In a few minutes, Momper returned in manifest alarm. "You must come and help me," he exclaimed, "for the prisoner won't speak, and has barred the door inside."

"Barred the door!" cried Van Laret. "Why, there are no bolts inside."

"Well—he's made it fast at all events," said Momper, impatiently, "and I can't open it. He's at work at some damnable contrivance or other, I expect—digging up the floor, or something; I've heard of such tricks before now."

"Let me catch him at it!" exclaimed Van Laret, starting upon his legs. "Come along, my lad! We'll ferret him out, I'll warrant; and, if he is at such capers as that, why, we'll just clap him into an iron suit, that's all."

When they arrived at the prison, it seemed that a fragment of the broken flooring had fallen from above, against the door, in such a manner as to prevent it from opening; but their

united strength soon overcame the obstacle, and then, to Momper's dismay, the apartment was vacant, and overhead was the gap, through which the prisoner appeared to have forced his passage. Van Laret's rage seemed to know no bounds: he stamped and swore, and, perhaps, somewhat overacted his part; for Momper ventured to tell him that it was folly to waste time in words, as the prisoner *must* be somewhere within the castle. Shortly afterwards, however, they discovered, at the corridor window, in what manner their charge had eloped; and then they held a council together respecting the means most likely to retake him. The result of their deliberations was, that all the strength of the castle, including the gamekeepers, were summoned into the hall, and there informed that a villain convicted of high treason had made his escape from the citadel at Namur, and had been traced into their neighbourhood.

"He is still supposed to be lurking in the forest," continued the governor, "and there's fifty

florins reward for the man that takes him, dead or alive, to the Bishop's Arms in the village."

To obtain this reward, there was a general saddling, and bridling, and then a galloping through the forest in every direction: but before Govert and Ralph departed, Van Laret took an opportunity of refreshing their memories relative to what they had observed in the morning.

"It's possible enough," said he, "that the villain may have fallen into the claws of *some* of the brutes; and, if you think so, why, you may, perhaps, get the fifty florins by hunting in their haunts and dens, where your comrades will never think of looking—and I dare say there'll be enough of his clothes, or something, left to identify the body, and that's all that's wanted. And mind and search all the woodmen's huts and cottages; for he may have got off with his life, after all, although there was such a stain by the roadside—and mind, *dead* or alive, it's all one—though, indeed, it would be a mercy to put such a wretch out of his misery at once;

for, if he's taken, he'll not go out of the world quite so easy as by a sword's point. Indeed I have reason to think that government would rather have him returned dead than alive, as that would be a warning to others how they attempted prison-breaking, and save a devil of an expense at law besides. So, if you *should* find him alive, and he makes the *least* show of resistance, why, you know——”

“Aye, aye, we'll soon settle his business,” they replied.

“And you may tell your comrades what I say about that matter,” continued Van Laret; “though perhaps you may choose to keep the other to yourselves; however, I should almost advise you to let the gamekeeper into your secret, as he most likely knows whereabouts to search, —but, do as you like—do as you like—and good luck to you!”

While the men were busily engaged in pursuit of the fugitive, the master and steward were left together, and the latter gave it as his

opinion, that Snell could not possibly evade the search that was going forward.

"But," he continued, "where could he have obtained the rope? There must be some accomplice within the castle. I'll swear he'd nothing of the kind when he came here."

"Humph!" said Van Laret, "have you forgotten the pens, and ink, and the hop-pole, eh? That's the way he got the rope, no doubt; and yet it's a wonder, too, that he didn't use it before."

"I see it! I see it all now!" cried Momper, striking his forehead. "Fool that I was! I told him yesterday, when I took him a double allowance, that perhaps I shouldn't see him again till to-morrow; and that was just the opportunity he had been waiting for."

"By St. Jago! if he *had* got the start for two days," said Van Laret, "we might as well whoop as go hunting after him. But, I'll tell you what, Momper, it's no use fretting about the matter now. We must do all we can to catch him

again; but, in case we shouldn't succeed, why, you must set your wits to work to make up as good a story as you can for us, for we're both in the same boat, sink or swim, only I've got the greatest stake in the matter. Yet, you know that you had the charge of the prisoner—not that I mean to blame you, though I might have spoke a little angrily at first—how could I help it? But I know you did all you could to keep him safe, and I couldn't have done more myself,—and so, no more of that—there's my hand. But, as I was saying, you *must* set your wits to work, or we may as well say 'good bye' to the castle at once, and go upon our travels."

Gaspar Momper was a man with whom fortune had dealt somewhat hardly. Regularly brought up to fulfil the duties of an overlooker, steward, or "reeve" of an estate, he knew no other means of procuring a livelihood. His places had been numerous, though he had seldom been discharged from any, unless when the estates, over which he had the controul, passed

into the hands of new masters; and such transfers of property had been so general in the Netherlands for the preceding twenty years, as to throw him frequently out of employment, and sometimes for a considerable period. To him, therefore, the stewardship of the St. Antoine estate was a thing of no small value. It brought him, every half-year, in immediate contact with the bishop's secretary; and his more immediate master, Van Laret, who knew nothing about the management of such property, treated him with a degree of friendship and familiarity which gratified both his feelings and his pride. He had never held a more easy situation. Every thing was under his own controul; his salary was handsome, and he contrived "a few pickings" here and there; so that he was saving money at the same time that he was living well, a matter which his residence in great families, and subsequent privations, had taught him to value, perhaps, somewhat too highly.

For all these reasons, Momper resolved "to

set his wits to work ;" and when the most rigid search throughout the forest proved fruitless, and all hopes of re-taking the prisoner were at an end, he drew up a long memorial, wherein it was stated that the housekeeper, Gertrude Bhlum, who had been retained in the service, contrary to his opinions and the wishes of his master, had contrived secretly to convey a ladder of ropes to the prisoner, for which she had, doubtless, been amply rewarded, as, without any known means of subsistence, she had left her place and fled out of the country, under the pretext of going to bury her grandfather. The affair of the long pole, pen, ink, and paper, was circumstantially related, and the affidavits of the men who had detected her in the act of secretly obtaining possession of the implement of mischief, was added in due form. The Reverend Pius Winkelman, in his clerical capacity, was likewise induced to sign a paper, in which the sudden and extraordinary departure of the said Gertrude was particularly described, as well as

the previous conference which he held with her, when she related to him a strange story about and concerning a certain ghost, but all which he now believed was a fabrication of her own brain, devised for the purpose of accomplishing her own wicked ends, by averting suspicion, and thereby more readily deceiving her worthy master. The good man, moreover, added, in his own hand, that the latter was "a most estimable neighbour, very generally respected by all who knew him, and quite exemplary in his conduct as a good Catholic, in attending, regularly, at the celebration of the mass, every Sunday, and at other convenient periods."

Provided with these documents and a portion of his ill-gotten wealth, to be dispensed as occasion might require, Van Laret went to Liege, accompanied by his steward, and by a proper use of both means of defence, they succeeded beyond their most sanguine expectations. One of the bishop's secretary's deputies, who stood high in his master's opinion, had a long private

conference with the memorialist, in which he became convinced that all had been done that could have been done; and, forthwith, represented to his superior the utter impossibility of confining a prisoner safely in such an intricate building as the castle of St. Antoine, when a plot for his escape was laid by the only person who was acquainted with those intricacies. "She has lived there, it seems," he continued, "from her youth up, and knew every secret passage. One might as well think of holding water in a colander; and I perfectly well recollect that the memorialist represented the impropriety of keeping the old woman; but she was forced upon him. I never saw a clearer case! He is far more to be pitied than blamed, seeing that he is now called upon to answer for the misconduct of one whom he never would have trusted, had he been left to the exercise of his own judgment. And, besides his well-known character as a brave soldier and a faithful subject of his majesty, see, your excellency! I pray

you to look at what the clergyman of his parish states respecting him, 'An exemplary and good Catholic, regular in his attendance at mass,' and so on. I put it to your excellency's good sense and well known love of justice, whether *such* a man ought, for a moment, to have his honour held in question on account of the faithlessness of a person whom he would have dismissed from his service long since, had it been in his power?"

"What is the name of the clergyman you were speaking of?" asked the secretary.

"Pius Winkelman," was the reply. "A most worthy man, and one who has succeeded in keeping his flock from going astray. We never hear of any heretics in that quarter. Indeed I should not wonder if the example and conduct of the memorialist, who is the principal person in the parish, had a great effect in keeping things as they are."

"Very like, very like," observed the secretary; "example goes a great way. We

not allow such a man to be lowered in his neighbours' opinion, if we can help it. But who was the prisoner?"

"One William Snell," replied the deputy. "There was no direct charge against him; but his parents were preparing to leave the country, and so *he* was taken up, as the best means of stopping *them*; but it seems that they have gone off without him, so that, as he is a minor, and has no property of his own, his escape cannot be a matter of the smallest importance."

"Why—no—I should think not," observed the secretary, "and good staunch Catholics, in these days, must not be thought lightly of. I'll speak to the bishop on the subject—and, in the meanwhile, I'll take it upon me to say you may tell the memorialist—that is, as if it was your own opinion—that you would recommend him to go home, and make his mind perfectly easy about the matter."

Van Laret, Momper, and the bishop's secretary's deputy dined together on that day, and

the latter accepted an invitation to the castle, when he was promised a fine haunch of venison, genuine old Johannisberg, and the company of the Reverend Pius Winkelman : and when they parted, at a late hour, they shook hands most cordially, perfectly convinced that they were all three good fellows, as well as good Catholics.

But though Van Laret was thus relieved from one cause of alarm, he was subject to fearful apprehensions respecting the real fate of Snell.

At first he had felt perfectly confident that he was too near his victim, at the time he fired, to admit of any chance of his escape : but subsequent reflection, together with the remembrance of extraordinary cases of recovery from desperate wounds, which had wont to be the topic of frequent conversation when he was in active service, led him to doubt—and doubt frequently brought on paroxysms of terror. In his dreams he was haunted by the figure of Snell, coming as an avenger, and beating him to the ground, in spite of the utmost exertions of his strength.

And his waking and calculating hours brought little relief, save that which he found in wine, to which he addicted himself now more than ever. Isabella, likewise, and her brother, became sources of extreme uneasiness to him; as he now knew they were heretics, and, consequently, their longer residence in the castle might subject him to the severest penalties of the law; but then he could not endure the thought of lessening his income by the amount paid for their accommodation, nor abandon the prospect of wringing "something handsome" from the orphan on account of the alleged law expenses. These he represented to her already amounted to more than double the sum he had received, and he daily expected one of the bishop's principal agents to come over and inspect the castle, and examine into the particulars of the prisoner's escape, in order to make his report to a board of inquiry, specially appointed for the purpose of "sifting the matter to the bottom." This visit, he said, would be attended with heavy

charges, as he must not only pay the fees, but entertain the agent and his followers, during their stay, with every thing of the best, or else he might expect them to become his enemies.

Isabella really pitied the poor man, and felt herself called upon, by every feeling of honour and justice, to do all in her power to relieve him from the embarrassments which he had brought upon himself, through her solicitations and his own humanity. She wrote to Monsieur Andelot for money; but that gentleman prudently declined to advance any considerable sum before she was of age, when, of course, the whole of her property would be at her own disposal; and, in the meanwhile, he referred her to Van Laret for such trifles as she might have occasion for, to be repaid at their annual settlement.

“Poor girl,” said the cautious guardian, “what can she want with three or four hundred florins? Some canting reformer, I suppose, has found her out—one of her poor father’s dear friends, belike—some rebellious, heretical

scheme or another, I dare say, is going on. But I'll keep myself, and her too, if I can, out of the scrape."

After the failure of this application, the governor was obliged to content himself with Isabella's promise of indemnification on her coming of age, in the following summer; and it was this assurance alone which prevented him from executing a diabolical scheme planned to ensure his own safety. He had determined, as soon as he should have extorted as much as possible from Isabella, to denounce her and her brother, and little Elinor, as incorrigible heretics, whom he had been induced, by false representations, to admit beneath his roof. By this step he calculated that he should not only relieve himself from the probable charge of harbouring reformers and evince his zeal for religion, but the effect would tend to invalidate Snell's testimony, in case he were really alive and ventured to prefer an accusation against him. To do him justice, he did hesitate a *little*

before he resolved to deliver up so beautiful a creature as Isabella into the hands of the executioner; but then she was the *only* witness that could be called to prove the existence of the prisoner's hidden treasure; and self preservation was always, with him, an imperative law. The prospect of receiving more money alone prevented him from putting this plan into execution; but it was only *deferred* on that account, with almost a certainty of being amply repaid for the risk of a few months' delay. And thus the caution of their guardian saved the orphans from destruction; for, at that period, neither sex nor age availed any thing to those accused of heresy; and it was not to be expected that either Isabella or her brother would have denied their faith. The latter, indeed, was then in such an excited state of mind, that he would have rushed onward to martyrdom, with the firm conviction that he was winning a crown of glory, through suffering; undaunted witness of the truth

little occasion to speak of him before, for his course of life was secluded, and one day seemed to all observers (and there were few who noticed him at the castle) to be like that which went before and that which followed. He would stroll forth into the forest, or shut himself in his chamber, with a book, if the weather was very unfavourable; but the open air, and woods, and wild scenery, were his delight, if any thing might be said to delight one who appeared to be under the influence of perpetual gloom. In those solitudes he nursed the fierceness of an ungovernable spirit. It were hazardous to affirm that he was under the influence of religious feelings; for, though the Bible was ever in his hand, and its words ever on his lips, they were but breathings of vengeance and malediction. He little loved to read lessons of meekness and patient enduring; but his heart glowed within him at "the overthrow of the mighty," and the "scattering of the oppressors like the dust of the earth." Then he would spend hours in some distant and

lonely glen, practising with fire-arms, in the use of which he soon acquired a deadly accuracy.

He loved his sister with a warmth of affection correspondent with the intensity of his other feelings ; but his presence was frequently most painful to her ; for he would sit and gaze silently upon her pale countenance, while his own gradually darkened into a fierce scowl, and his quivering lips moved, as though striving, ineffectually, to reveal the angry workings within. Nothing, at these moments, appeared capable of affecting him but the presence of little Elinor, whose innocent caresses would, like sweet music, chase away the evil spirit for awhile. As she played with the ringlets of his dark hair, he would hang over her, while the tear glittered in his eye ; then he would press her to his bosom, lest she might notice his weakness, and the child would return his embrace, and declare that she loved him “dearly—dearly.” But those were moments of forgetfulness—gleams of light, which broke upon, but belonged not to the habitual darkness of his spirit.

He had once met the Reverend Pius Winkelman, as he was on his way to pay a morning visit at the castle, and frightened the good man extremely by the fierce and scornful manner in which he passed him. The sight of a brace of pistols, thrust through his belt, while he carried a gun in his hand, added not a little to the priest's apprehensions, and he related the particulars of the encounter to the governor, who was, thereby, much amused; but told his reverence that he need not be under any alarm, as it was only a poor lad whose intellects were not quite as they should be, yet that he was perfectly harmless. The priest, however, thought it hardly safe that such an individual should be entrusted with fire-arms; and, having understood the hour when the youth usually went out upon his daily rambles, took especial care to time his own visits accordingly.

Van Laret's representation was the accredited belief throughout his household, and had been strongly corroborated by a circumstance which took place one morning within the walls of the

castle. Several of the men were engaged in a trial of skill, with basket-hilted sticks instead of swords; and Ernest, who had practised under a scientific master while at college, was induced to stand by as a spectator.

It was so unusual for him to notice anything which occurred, that, notwithstanding his idiotism, the combatants felt highly gratified at having attracted his attention; and when their "bout" was at an end, Govert, who had got the better of his opponent, ventured to address the youth, and recommended him to "try his hand at the sport a bit, for it was capital exercise."

"With all my heart," said Ernest, to the astonishment of the bystanders, who immediately crowded round, and began laughing and jeering, and whispered Govert to "lay it well into him," and were, altogether, highly delighted at the idea of "young Sourkrout's" getting a good thrashing, for which nobody but himself could be blamed. Whether his natural irritability was excited by overhearing this mockery, or

some of the illusions which he cherished in solitude came over him, Ernest no sooner felt the weapon in his hand, and saw an opponent before him, than he began the combat in a style which left Govert's companions little reason to envy his situation. In the course of a minute their champion's hat was knocked off, and his head streamed with blood; yet, enraged and mortified, he continued the encounter, now, with a fury equal to that of his antagonist, who pressed him harder and harder, hitting him in every direction, and "laying it well into him," till the spectators, seeing that he had "no chance," felt themselves called upon to interfere and separate the combatants, a task which they effected not without receiving a few smart blows among them.

Ernest then took up his gun and walked off, leaving Govert to the care of his companions, who, forthwith, made him the object of their coarse jocularities, and remembered divers tales concerning the danger of irritating an idiot.

CHAPTER IX.

THE time of which we now write was during the reign of our own Queen Elizabeth, to whom King Philip, of Spain and the Netherlands, scrupled not to make proposals of marriage, although he was the widower of her sister Mary, whose thirst for persecution is supposed to have been much increased by the councils of her husband. The maiden queen, however, happily for her country, thought proper to decline the proffered alliance; and pursued measures which clearly evinced, not only her intention of countenancing Protestants, but her determination to abolish popery throughout her dominions. And thus England became a place of refuge for the reformers, whom Philip's bloodthirsty agents were pursuing with fire and sword.

As stated by the prisoner Snell, in his conversation with Isabella at their first interview, the Randolph family was among the number of these refugees, and the son Charles had returned to the Netherlands in order to effect the sale of some remaining property on his father's account. From thence he was obliged to go into Holland, for a similar purpose; and, while in that country, he heard of the investment of Valenciennes by the King's troops. But there were no daily papers in those days, to make known the particulars of every event, and he remained, for many weeks, totally ignorant that anything extraordinary had happened on that occasion. At length, however, there came whisperings of fearful import, and those who knew him and his connexions shrank aside at his approach. But the truth could not long remain concealed, and it is not to be supposed that the lover of Isabella hesitated a moment after it reached his ear. He travelled night and day, till he reached Valenciennes. It

was mid-day when he arrived; and his tall figure, and the wild expression of his handsome countenance, as he rushed along the streets, attracted the notice of all. It would be useless to attempt a description of his feelings when he reached the well-known door, and found the house deserted. The windows were closed—the marks of many footsteps were on the stone threshold, which the old family servants used to keep in all the proverbial neatness of the Dutch; and huge placards, pasted against the walls, announced that the property was to be sold by public auction, under sentence of confiscation.

“Where are they gone?” exclaimed Charles Randolph, as he entered a neighbouring shop, the good woman of which immediately recognised him.

“Walk this way—this way,” she cried, in a half-whisper, and hurried him into a little back parlour. “Sit down, sir—sit down, and compose yourself, and I will tell you all.”

“I know what has happened,” said Charles;

"but—the others? The orphans—where—where are they?"

"Thank God," replied the good woman, "they are in safety with their friends."

"Thank God, indeed!" exclaimed the lover; and, overcome by this blessed relief from intense anxiety, he sank forward upon a small table, and hid his face in his hands to conceal his emotion. His kind-hearted hostess then prevailed upon him to take some refreshment, under a promise that she would tell him every thing which had occurred. The sum and substance of her communication, however, went merely so far as to state, that, about a fortnight after Monsieur Freron's untimely end, a gentleman, whom he had appointed as guardian to his children, and who, she understood, was his particular friend, had arrived and taken them under his protection. But she could not recollect his name. "It was Andrè, Andrea, Ancot, or something like that," she said, "but no doubt some of the neighbours will remember it."

Released now from his worst fears, Charles

looked forward with certainty to a speedy union with Isabella; as his own father had agreed to the marriage, as soon as their family affairs were arranged, provided he could obtain Monsieur Freron's consent. His own exertions, both at Brussels and in Holland, had been crowned with success, and he had been enabled to remit nearly the whole amount of the property sold to England. There might be some delay, he feared, from respect to her parent's memory; but, as she now must feel sensible that she had no other protector, it was not to be supposed that she would refuse to *him* the performance of that enviable office, till time should have worn away the acuteness of her grief; and admit him to claim her by a dearer title. Such were Charles Randolph's dreams, doomed, like those of most of our race, to be dissipated by what appeared the merest trifle. There was now but *one* difficulty in the way of their meeting, and that was so insignificant that it gave him not the smallest uneasiness. It was *merely* to as-

Released from his word bonds, Charles

certain the name of her guardian and his place of residence. None of the people in the neighbourhood could recollect if they had ever heard it, and the poor woman at the shop could only remember that the name was mentioned in her hearing, either by little Elinor, or the servants of the family, who were now returned to Holland, their native country; but she was "confident it began with an A, and was like André or Andrea, or some such name."

The innkeeper, at whose house he lodged, remembered him well, and described his person, and the chamberlain recollected that his luggage had no name upon it. Unfortunately for the anxious inquirer, M. Andelot's appearance had nothing singular or striking about it. He was of the middle height; neither corpulent nor meagre; neither pale nor fresh coloured; nor was there anything remarkable in his voice, gait, or manners. He was remembered merely because he came to see the orphans of one, whose fate was lamented by those who dared not openly

express their commiseration. The innkeeper was one of this number; and, when Charles had been several times at his house, cross-questioning the servants, he led him aside, and represented the danger of appearing to take such a deep interest in the affairs of a heretic.

"Every one is watched here," he continued, "and particularly strangers at hotels."

"I thank you for your counsel," replied Charles, firmly, "and I know it is safe, as it is well meant; but, let the consequences be what they may to myself, I cannot, I will not lose a moment in prosecuting my inquiries, for I am, indeed, deeply interested in discovering the present abode of those orphans."

"If you come to me this evening, after dark," said the landlord, "I will, in the meanwhile endeavour to pick up what information I can, and I think it likely that I shall be able to tell you which road they took, at all events. So, just step this way, and I'll let you out by the back door that you must come in at, for you've

been seen, I'm afraid, too often the front way. I can't trust my own servants now. I've one or two, I know, no better than spies; and it's of no use to turn them away, for I must fill their places, if I did, with others of the same sort." He then let his visitor out into a narrow dark alley, which led into a back street, and proceeded to make inquiries, according to his promise; and, when Charles came again in the evening, afforded him the first trace of the fugitives.

"I thought," said he, "that I recollected who it was that drove the person you were asking after, and I've found him. He says he went to take them up at the late M. Freron's house, and drove them the first stage towards Maubeuge, where they went on directly without stopping. There were four of them—the gentleman who lodged here; Mademoiselle Freron, and her brother, who came home from college directly after his father's death; and a little girl, that kept laughing and chattering all the way."

"The same! the same!" exclaimed Charles.
"Let me have horses directly!"

"Gently, Gently," replied the landlord,
"you can't go to-night. The gates are closed:
but, besides that, I think you can make better
use of your time than galloping at a venture,
for I've found out that the person you want
went to consult a lawyer close by here, from
whom you may, perhaps, be able to learn his
name and all about him."

"I never can thank you enough!" exclaimed
Charles. "Tell me, where does he live?"

"Gently! gently again!" cried the landlord.
"You must be very cautious what you say, and
how you go to work with old Van Bruggen,
who is as sly as a fox, and a sworn enemy to
all reformers. I don't want to ask any imper-
tinent questions; but, if you haven't got money,
it's of no use to go to him; but, I do believe
he'd do *any* thing for *that*."

In the course of a very few minutes Charles
Randolph was sitting in a small, office-like

room, in which were too large arm-chairs and a table, covered with papers and parchments, filed and tied up in regular order. The ticking vibrations of a huge wooden clock announced the tardy progress of time, and its heavy hands crept forward, for the space of a quarter of an hour, ere the lawyer made his appearance. He was a short, heavy, bloated looking man, whose unmeaning countenance told of other occupations than study over the midnight lamp. With an air of importance he entered the room, wrapped in a dark coloured camblet gown, edged with fur, and a velvet cap upon his head; and, after a ceremonious bow and a grin of welcome to his new client, he took his seat in one of the arm-chairs, and motioned his visitor to occupy the other.

Like most young persons, Charles was somewhat too apt to judge of men by their outward appearance. He thought he had never beheld any countenance so forbidding as that now before him; and though the object of his visit

was one of so much importance to himself, he felt at a loss how to commence the conversation.

"You wished to speak to me on particular business?" said Van Bruggen.

"Yes, Sir," was the reply; "I believe—that is I have been given to understand—that you are acquainted with the concerns of the late Monsieur Freron."

"I! I! not I!" exclaimed the lawyer, almost starting out of his chair, "I have any thing to do with the concerns of a well-known traitor! a reforming heretic! I! no, indeed, if you have been told that, you have been most egregiously misinformed. And so, if that is all your business, why, it is very soon settled."

"That is not all," said Charles, in a most ungracious tone, although he strove as much as possible to stifle his indignation against the reptile who had dared so to speak of the father of his Isabella.

"Well, sir, well, if *that* is the case," observed

Van Bruggen, again setting himself in his seat, "I am all attention to any thing you may have to say. Perhaps I was somewhat too warm; but, if you knew the trouble we have had with those rascally reformers, you wouldn't wonder at it."

Charles fortunately recollected the innkeeper's advice, and resolved to act cautiously. He therefore proceeded:—"The person of whom we just spoke, had, at the time of his death, some property in his possession which I hope to recover."

"Then you may hope if you like," said the lawyer, "but unless it is of very great value, I should recommend you to say nothing about it. It's an ugly thing to take bones out of the lion's mouth, and his property is now *regularly* condemned—confiscated—all up."

"But it is of *very great* value," replied Charles, secretly pleased, even in this ambiguous manner, to speak of his mistress.

"That *may* alter the case," observed Van Bruggen, doubtfully. "But at all events, you

may rely upon me. With my connection, I may say I can do more for you than all the rest of the profession in the town: but, it's a ticklish case, a ticklish case to go to work about. However, you couldn't have done better than come to me; so, now, let us go into particulars," and he took a sheet of paper, and prepared to take notes officially.

"The first step," said Charles, "must be to find out the person to whom the late Monsieur Freron has entrusted the care of his children."

"What's the use of that?" exclaimed the lawyer. "He has got the children in their skins, safe and sound, poor devils! and much good may they do him; but the property is here, snug under lock and key, with the king's seal upon it."

"You are under a mistake, sir," said Charles, "the most valuable part of his property is at a distance from Valenciennes."

"Aye, aye! Where, where?" eagerly inquired Van Bruggen. "We shall make a good

case, I see. All we have to do is to lodge an information where the property is—then it will be regularly seized, by an order from the council, and our claims, that is yours, for I speak now professionally, will be most certainly allowed, in consequence of the disclosure. So, now for particulars ;” and he selected a printed form too frequently in use at that period.

“I hope ; that is, I fear,” said Charles, “that the property in question is beyond the limits of the Council’s jurisdiction.”

“Bah !” ejaculated the lawyer, “that alters the case again. But where is it ? Tell me the place, and I’ll soon find out. The law has long arms, I promise you.”

“That is precisely what I wish to know,” replied Charles. “All that I can now state is, that I am certain he did leave the property in question behind him, and that I have a most undoubted right to claim it ; but I cannot ascertain where it is, unless I can find the person to whose care the children are left.”

“Humph!” said Van Bruggen, laying down his pen. “This is a strange story of yours, young man! I don’t know what to make of it. How am I to help you to find this person out? I never have any dealings with such sort of people. If you have any claim, make it at once, for there’s property enough condemned here to pay you. Give me the particulars, and we’ll go to work at once—we shall be sure to recover. It will be a little expensive, perhaps, at first going off, but you musn’t mind that.”

“Oh no,” replied Charles, exhibiting a purse well lined with gold. “I know one cannot go to law without money; but I am resolved not to commence any other proceedings till I have found the individual in question; and he, I am assured, was with you on the day previous to his departure from hence with the orphans.”

“With me! with me!” exclaimed the lawyer. “Impossible! I *must* recollect it if he had.”

“I have traced him,” continued Charles Randolph, “to your door, and here is a note of the

very day," and he handed him a paper which he had copied by reference to the landlord's books.

"I put down every visit," observed Van Bruggen, "and so it is very easy to refer," and stretching his arm behind him, he took a long narrow book from its place among others ranged on a shelf against the wall, and soon found the date in question, when he began reading, in a sort of humming tone, till he had finished the detail of the day's transactions. "No," he then said, "there's nothing here concerning Freron's business, nor any thing bearing upon such matters. There must be some mistake."

"Give me leave," exclaimed Charles, taking hold of the book on which his eyes had been anxiously fixed during the scrutiny.

"Why, no," said the lawyer, glancing at the purse of gold which still remained on the table. "We are not in the habit of showing our books, unless for very good and sufficient reason."

His client took the hint, and after placing a

piece of gold on the table, from whence it soon disappeared, he proceeded to decipher the technical jargon of three closely written pages, while Van Bruggen sate watching him, with his little red eyes, wondering who and what he was, and thinking how he could make the most of his new acquaintance. The search appeared fruitless. There was indeed nothing in any way relative to the affairs of the Freron family. So almost in despair, he reconned the names of those who had, on that day, consulted the lawyer, and, among the rest, discovered that of a Monsieur Andelot, who seemed to have wished for information relative to a question of Tithes. It was the only name bearing any resemblance to that of the person he sought, and therefore, though with but faint hope, he committed it to memory.

While he was thus engaged, Van Bruggen felt convinced that he had seen his face somewhere before, and could not help fancying it was in company with some of the Frerons.

"I'll soon find that out, however," thought he, and so, when Charles shut up the book, he said, "Indeed it was a very unlikely thing that any of that set should have come to *me* for advice, for my principles are too well known."

"Are they?" uttered Charles, in a dry scornful manner, for he felt no interest now in keeping the lawyer in good humour; though, to say the truth, he did not mean then to insult him, for he scarcely knew what he said. His thoughts had wandered far away. But they were soon recalled by Van Bruggen's vehemence, as he replied,

"Yes, sir, they *are* well known, and I glory in them; and am not obliged to hide my head by day, and sneak about by night, not I. Such fellows as Freron were no company for me; and as for his precious daughter, whom they used to cry up for her beauty, I always suspected she was no better than she should be; and now, it seems, she's gone off with some fellow or other whom nobody knows."

This was too much. The imprudence of a young lover has always been proverbial; and Charles Randolph justified his claim to that character, by attacking the defamer of his mistress in a violent philippic, somewhat in the spirit and style of that of Laertes to the priest, in *Hamlet*.* Van Bruggen was so accustomed to abuse from his clients, in the way of his profession, that, after retreating behind the chair, lest the enraged youth should proceed to personal violence, he listened with a grim delight, such as a spider may be supposed to feel when he sees a young fly entangling itself in the trammels of his web.

"Have you any further observations to make?" he asked, coolly, when Charles had exhausted himself; and at the same time rang a little silver bell which stood by his side.

A servant made his appearance almost immediately.

* "A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling."

“Show this person out, Philip,” said his master.

“Scoundrel!” exclaimed Charles. “If you were worthy the name of a man——”

It was useless to proceed farther, whatever he might have intended to say; for the lawyer had passed through the opposite door, and banged it rudely after him.

No sooner was our hero in the street than he resolved to dismiss “the old scoundrel” from his thoughts, after liberally bestowing upon him a variety of those uncharitable wishes of which too many of us are apt to be profuse towards our enemies. And, having thus “eased his mind,” he proceeded straight forward in his inquiries.

The landlord said that he was confident the gentleman, who left town with the Frerons, had called upon the lawyer on the day stated, because he had inquired of one of the waiters where Van Bruggen lived, and afterwards took another man with him to show him the door.

But whether the person's name was Andelot or not, he could not pretend to say.

Something more promising was the result of Charles's next visit to the shop, the good woman of which told him that she was "*almost sure*," and then that she was "*quite certain* Andelot was the name by which little mademoiselle, or one of the servants, had called the gentleman."

Upon the strength of this combined circumstantial evidence, he instantly resolved to follow the only track which, faint as it might appear, promised to conduct him to Isabella; and when the sun rose, on the following morning, he was some miles distant from Valenciennes.

It was well for him that he had been thus prompt in his movements; for, before the hour of noon, active minions of the law, mis-called officers of justice, were diligently searching after him in every quarter of the town; and placards, describing his person, and offering a reward for his apprehension, were posted at the corners of

streets and squares. For this notoriety he was indebted to Van Bruggen, who, in due form, had deposed to his being a most violent and pestilent heretic, and, as he verily believed, an active and dangerous member of the plots known to exist for the subversion of religion and the government.

“A precious escape I have had of it,” muttered the man of law, on his way home, after this display of loyalty and zeal. “A pretty thing it would have been for *me* to have been engaged in a suit against the crown, with a reformer for my client! What, in the name of St. Ignatius, could have possessed the fool to think I had the management of Freron’s property? Well, well—the inquisitors have ways and means of screwing out the secret of the other property he mentioned, and it will be hard if I don’t get something by that. But his coming to me to make the disclosure was, after all, a strange thing, and shows how the devil loves to mislead his followers.”

The reader will, perhaps, recollect Monsieur Andelot's extreme caution, and his fear of being suspected as an abettor and harbourer of reformers. His visit to Van Bruggen was made simply to convince the people of the inn, who were frequently questioned respecting strangers, that his connections were of a very different stamp; and he, therefore, gave it all the publicity in his power, by inquiring for the well-known anti-reforming lawyer, in the presence of all the waiters and idle loungers commonly to be seen about the gate of a large hotel. The confabulation about tithes, in which his former practice enabled him easily to assimilate a case, was, of course, merely a pretext for passing an hour within the house. The omission of a name, likewise, on his luggage, was not accidental. Indeed Monsieur Andelot seldom did any thing, or left any thing undone, without being able to produce half-a-dozen reasons for his conduct. He had requested Isabella to avoid mentioning his name while at Valenciennes, as it *could* not

be of any use, and *might* be the cause of impertinent inquiries; and Isabella complied with his request, without comprehending its import. But little Elinor and the maids used to gossip about him; and children and servants commonly make woful havoc among secrets.

To return to Charles Randolph, whom we left on the road to Maubeuge. No sooner had he reached that town than he commenced a series of most perplexing inquiries among innkeepers, postillions, and stable-boys—hunting for some in obscure cabarets or public-houses, and then waiting the return of others who were thought more likely to afford him the information he wanted. His extreme activity and anxiety excited much attention among the plebeians, who marvelled what he could be, and set themselves to guessing and discussing the matter over their mugs; and the result of their deliberations was to pronounce him a limb of the law, in chace of heretics or refugees.

Whether it be from an innate love of mercy,

or the pleasure of baffling the intentions of those in power, let philosophers determine—but so it is. The lower order of people, in every country, are much given to throw hindrances and stumbling blocks in the way of subaltern agents of the law, such as constables, sheriffs' officers, and bum-bailiffs. Consequently poor Charles, being reckoned one of this useful and respectable fraternity, soon found himself completely mystified, among the embarrassing and contradictory accounts which were, gravely and circumstantially, detailed to him. It seemed as though the individuals whom he had traced thus far, had miraculously multiplied themselves during their stay in the town, and gone off to all points of the compass. To give up such a pursuit, however, was quite out of the question; and if he should be compelled to traverse every road that led from the place, he wisely concluded that he must select one to begin with. While he was debating which it should be, he thought himself very fortunate in having attracted the

notice of a lounge, evidently not of the "bas" class, who remembered the party in question perfectly well.

"I have seen the elderly gentleman," he said, "several times before, and was told that he lived in one of the towns upon the river; but, really, whether it was Namur, or Huy, or Liege, or Maestricht, I cannot just now recollect."

Without further hesitation, Charles posted off to the former, because it was the nearest place; and was highly [delighted, on his arrival, to find himself at the same inn where his friends had stopped.

"Oh, bless you!" said the loquacious landlady, "I know Monsieur Andelot as well as my own brother. It seems but yesterday like that they were here and stopped all night; and here, just step this way and I'll show you how it was. There—he slept in this room, number eighteen, and the young lady slept in that room opposite. Oh! yes—you can go in, if you like; there's nobody there now. A nice room,

isn't it? See what a fine view you have of the country and the river! Well! as I was saying, the young lady slept in this room; there—in that *there* bed, and we moved another in for little ma'amselle. La! what a child that was! She was all over the house in no time! I was terribly afraid she'd meet with some accident; but, however, she didn't."

"I think you said that Mons. Andelot lived in the neighbourhood?" observed Charles.

"Oh, bless you, no!" replied the landlady; "he lives some where down the river; but I don't exactly know where. We can soon find out that, though, if you want to know, for he's very intimate with our mayor, though he didn't call upon him last time he was here, and particularly told me not to mention that he had been here, for fear his friend should be angry; but I suppose he didn't like to take so large a party to a private house; or else he always eats and drinks there, and sometimes takes a bed too, when there is room for him. However, as I

suppose you'd like to lie down a bit, after travelling all night, I'll send my husband up to inquire."

The offer was very tempting. Charles looked at the bed and rubbed his eyes, and thought that a short nap there would be very refreshing; but his better star prevailed, and he determined to visit the mayor himself.

He was ushered into a large oak wainscoted apartment hung round with a profusion of family paintings, and found himself in the presence of a fine venerable old gentleman, whose benignant countenance and scattered silver hair, might have served Wilkie for a study, when wishing to pourtray the good old "head of the family." As all important difficulties were now surmounted, and, to use a sporting phrase, the scent lay strong, Charles had left the inn with a light heart, and felt not a little gratified at the striking contrast between Monsieur Le Jonge and the lawyer Van Bruggen.

In reply to the youth's inquiries, the good

man immediately replied, that he knew Monsieur Andelot well, and had been intimate with him for many years. "His usual residence," said he, "is at Maestricht; but I hardly think you will find him there just now; for, in his last letter to me, he spoke of a journey to Holland, where I know he has some property. Are you particularly anxious to see him immediately?"

"Yes; very particularly," replied Charles: "so much so, that if I do not find him at home, I must follow him to Holland."

"I'm afraid you'll have an arduous task," observed Monsieur Le Jonge; "for the fact is, that my worthy friend Andelot is a man of peaceable habits, and somewhat nervous withal; and I rather apprehend that his present journey is not quite so much an affair of business, as for the purpose of being out of the way of conflicting parties; and, just now, matters are somewhat rough at Maestricht."

"I hope," exclaimed Charles, while a deadly

paleness overspread his countenance, at the idea that Monsieur Andelot, Isabella's guardian, had perhaps fallen a victim to the murderers of her father; "I hope he has not—that is—tell me, sir, I entreat you! Is he in difficulty?"

The good old man perceived and endeavoured to quiet the youth's alarm, by an assurance that his friend was in excellent circumstances.

"But," said Charles, "has he, in any way, exposed himself to the laws which are now so—?" and he was at a loss for a safe word to proceed with.

"Oh, no! not at all! not at all!" replied Monsieur Le Jonge: "you must know very little of Monsieur Andelot to suppose any thing of the sort."

"I do not know him at all," said Charles; "but I am extremely anxious to see him."

"That is very evident," observed the mayor; "and I am sorry that it is out of my power to give you any farther information. And yet,"

he continued, gravely, "perhaps I might be able, if I knew exactly what your business was with him. I do not wish to be impertinently inquisitive; but the intimacy between us is so close, and of such long standing, that I think I may say there are no secrets between us, and that I know all Monsieur Andelot's concerns as well as himself. But you must remember I am now speaking to one with whom I have not the pleasure of being acquainted."

Without any hesitation, the young man told his name and the object of his pursuit, omitting only the most important fact, that he was the accredited suitor of Isabella; but, nevertheless, the old gentleman set that down as a matter of course; for "he remembered that he once was young," and Charles spoke as lovers are wont to speak of poor Monsieur Freron's amiable family.

When he had finished, the venerable man shook his head, and said, "I fear, young gentleman, you have been most sadly led astray.

Nothing is more unlikely than that my friend Andelot should either be chosen to undertake such a charge, or that he would accept it, if he had been. I know that, many years ago, he was acquainted with the late Monsieur Freron; but I also know, that all correspondence had ceased between them latterly; and have reason to believe, that a coolness existed on either side, in consequence of a difference in religious opinions."

"But I have traced them thus far, and they were here together at the inn," said Charles.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Monsieur La Jonge. "He *never* went through Namur without calling upon *me*! and I *must* have heard of it."

The youth then repeated what he had heard from the landlady. "It is a most extraordinary affair," observed the mayor, "but as the children of the unfortunate man must have been guilty—I mean suspected of attending the meetings of reformers, of course you cannot expect to find them at his residence."

"Why not?" exclaimed Charles, warmly. "Surely, sir, the rites of hospitality—the common feelings of humanity—the Christian duties of charity, would not allow him to desert the orphans, of whom he had once undertaken the charge! And surely the accursed spirit of persecution would not follow the defenceless."

"Gently!" said the good man, forcing a momentary frown on his placid countenance, "whatever you may think, or even I may think, of the laws, (and remember I am a magistrate,) they are very explicit. *If* my friend has *really* taken the charge of these children, which I can scarcely credit, he is too much a man of honour to omit any precaution for their safety: but he must likewise attend to his own; and, therefore, I warn you not to anticipate finding them at his residence."

"Oh, my unhappy country!" exclaimed Charles, "where the orphan and the innocent must hide their heads, while tyranny and murder stalk openly throughout the land!"

"Hold, hold, young man!" cried the mayor, in a tone of authority. "Remember before whom you are speaking. The laws are not of my making, or, perhaps—but such language, addressed to me, is a personal insult; and therefore——"

"Nothing could be farther from my intentions," said Charles, "but my feelings——"

"You must *learn* to repress them," kindly observed the old gentleman. "I am not one who would take advantage of youthful indiscretions; but there are those, before whom such words, as you have just uttered, would cost you dear."

At this moment, a servant entered, and laid a large sealed packet upon the table, and immediately retired. "Excuse me for a minute," said the mayor, who began to feel an interest respecting his young visitor, to whom he purposed to give a few words of wholesome advice ere they parted.

"I must look into the contents of this, which

is on *public* business, and, *therefore*, must not be neglected ;” and breaking the seals, he proceeded to the perusal of a letter, which lay on the top of a mass of papers, of which the packet was composed.

As he read, he became deeply affected by something contained in the letter—his hand shook violently, and a cold perspiration seemed gathering on his forehead ; and a moment after, he cast a glance, expressive of deep mental agony upon his young visitor, and let the paper fall upon the table.

“ You are ill, sir,” exclaimed Charles, “ shall I call for assistance ?”

“ Stir not for your life !” ejaculated the venerable old man, summoning all his energies. “ Unhappy youth ! Read that ;” and taking a paper from the pile, he passed it across the table, and then covered his face with his hands.

The youth’s feelings may be imagined, when he saw, in large printed characters, his own name, a description of his person, and a con-

siderable reward offered for his apprehension, as a heretic and traitor.

The arm of vindictive law had already reached thus far to seize its victim.

CHAPTER X.

MONSIEUR LE JONGE, the worthy and venerable mayor of Namur, had held that situation for many years, and was universally and deservedly respected. A member of the Roman Catholic Church from his youth, and a conscientious believer in its doctrines, he saw with regret, and almost with dismay, the progress of the reformed religion. But his was not a persecuting spirit, and he lamented, in common with many of his own persuasion, that the king could not be induced to pursue milder measures for checking the growth of error. He felt convinced that persecution was the seed, which engendered and nourished vain-glorious pride and self-sufficient ignorance; and elevated to

the rank of leaders and martyrs, men who would otherwise have sunk into contempt and insignificance. His duties, in the then existing state of things, became irksome, and frequently most painful to him; and he had, consequently, tendered his resignation of office, under the plea of advanced age. But his superiors, and the clergy, whose influence over the members of their faith is proverbial, induced him to continue his valuable services to a government, now beset with difficulties, and to a church, surrounded on every side by, and constantly subject to the attacks of its bitterest enemies.

The feelings of such a man, placed in the situation described at the close of the last chapter, must, indeed, have been most acute. His instructions urged him to use every means for the apprehension of one then within his power, and to whom his next word must be the sentence of life or death. A thousand fearful pictures hurried rapidly across his imagination—the sufferings of the poor youth, cut off on the verge of man-

hood, and cursing his betrayer with his latest breath—the forlorn and bewailing orphan, deprived of her only hope of joy and comfort, and protection, and sent adrift, to wander through the world, a wretched victim to all the ills that await the friendless and beautiful female. On the other side, stood his engagement to obey the laws as they were, and to cause them to be obeyed. He had never forfeited his word—nor had a falsehood ever escaped his lips. It was a hard struggle—but the idea that the blood of the victim would be on his head, carried all before it, and mercy prevailed.

Charles Randolph sat, in the meanwhile, with the paper in his hand, as though it were his death-warrant. The fatigue both of body and mind, which he had previously undergone, might have contributed somewhat to the effect; but his faculties all appeared to be benumbed, and he remained fixed in one position, with his eyes glaring upon the characters before him, like one endeavouring to comprehend the mys-

tery of a fearful dream. From this reverie he was startled by hearing a deep groan.

"Would to Heaven that I had never seen you!" exclaimed the venerable man. "But—now—no delay! Away, while there is yet a chance of escape! No one has seen me open this packet but yourself. Go not to the inn, for the messenger who brought this, has most likely some loose papers with him of the same description. But hold! a thought strikes me—Yes!—that is the only way;" and he wrote a few words on a piece of paper, while Charles endeavoured to express his gratitude. "We have no time for ceremony," rejoined Monsieur Le Jonge. "Take that paper, and give it to the keeper of the ferry-house, on the opposite bank, and he will furnish you with a horse, on the speed of which alone hangs your chance of escape. Do not believe yourself safe till you have crossed the Rhine. Attend to no one who tells you of boundaries on this side, for they have changed too often to render you secure."

Then, without admitting any farther delay, the good man thrust the packet and its contents into a private drawer, and conducted his *protégé* through his garden, to the river side; and then, directing him the nearest way to the ferry, bade him "God speed," and stood watching, till the boat made its appearance, from behind some intervening houses, and he saw that the poor fellow had been permitted to embark without hindrance. He then returned slowly along his garden, where he was well pleased to find a neighbour, with whom he contrived to spend half an hour in desultory chat, at the end of which he seemed suddenly to recollect that he had received a packet, "which appeared as if it was concerning public business;" and, after a few more last words on either side, they separated, and he betook himself to the execution of the first "double-faced" public transaction in which he had ever been concerned, and wherein he had already paved the way for "mystifying" his superiors, by the observation just made to his

neighbour. And thus it is, that any dereliction from a straight-forward course, invariably calls for minor and corroborating misrepresentations and false statements, to uphold and give a fair colouring to the original deceit.

If any successful defence can be made for a breach of duty, or the end ever be fairly adduced to justify the means, the mayor had, certainly, a strong case in the court of conscience. But the path of deceit was new to him, and he shuffled along in a very awkward manner. After allowing sufficient time to elapse, wherein he might be supposed to be engaged in perusing the documents, he took them to the office of his clerk, a regularly-bred underling of the law.

"It seems that he has escaped from Valenciennes, and has been traced in the direction of Maubeuge," observed the mayor.

"Humph! yes," said the clerk, poring over the papers. "Hum—'oval countenance—dark hair—somewhat ruddy—nose inclined to aquiline—apparently about twenty years of age—

rather tall—exact height not known—a hundred florins - apprehension—hundred florins - conviction—.’ Humph! We must lose no time in having these posted up in the neighbouring villages. I don’t think it likely that the fellow would show himself in the town.”

“Well, well,” said the mayor; “you will do your duty I know for the apprehension of the villain. It’s a sad thing that such fellows should be loose upon society. There must be some examples made, or there’s no telling how these things will end.”

No sooner had he left the office than the clerk observed, “There’s something extraordinary about our governor this morning! The old gentleman seems bitten with the persecuting mania. I suppose old father Ignatius has been giving him a lecture.”

In a very short time, the description of the fugitive was to be seen in all parts of the town, and he was soon identified as the individual who had arrived that morning at the inn, where, to

make the question clear, his portmanteau was found, with the initials C. R. engraven on a brass plate. "I don't believe it can be him, though," said the landlady, "for he was an intimate friend of Monsieur Andelot's, who always stops at the mayor's, and he's gone up there himself to inquire after him; so, if it is him, you'll find him soon enough."

When this was made known to the mayor, he affected great surprise, and said that, certainly a young gentleman had been with him, before he received the packet, inquiring the residence of Monsieur Andelot, with whom he appeared to have some business: "But," continued the good man, "I really cannot say that I think he is the man we want to take. Let me see—no—the young man with me was decidedly pale; and he couldn't, exactly, be called tall—and, as for dark hair, why—that is a very vague term. However, be he who he may, he went out, through my garden, by his own desire, to take a walk along the river side, and look at the

scenery. I can't say precisely which way he went, but there can be no difficulty in finding a stranger under such circumstances. So, if you'll just bring him up here, we'll have him examined at all events, and see what account he can give of himself."

It would be quite unnecessary to describe the search along the river's banks, and subsequently through the town. The portmanteau was then taken to the mayor's, in due form, and its contents too plainly evinced that the owner was the identical Charles Randolph; and then the pursuit became still more arduous, and men, of all descriptions, were running in all directions, with the hope of gaining two hundred florins.

That we may not have to recur to the circumstance, it may be as well to state here that, some months afterwards, an inquiry was instituted to investigate the particulars of the delinquent's extraordinary escape; and it would have gone hard with the venerable magistrate, had it not been for his well-known attachment to the

Catholic religion, and the evidence of his neighbour, respecting the conversation in the garden. He was acquitted of any connivance; but was given to understand that it was the duty of a public officer to open letters and packets the moment they reached his hands. Shortly afterwards, the good man withdrew into private life, determined no longer to continue in a post, the duties of which he could not conscientiously fulfil.

When Charles found himself at the ferry-house, after landing from the boat which conveyed him across the Meuse, he requested the loan of a good horse from the landlord, at the same time exhibiting the paper given to him by the mayor.

"To be sure—certainly," said the man of the house, "always happy to oblige the friends of Monsieur Le Jonge. I wish all our magistrates were like him. How far is it you want to go, sir?"

"Why, that's rather uncertain," replied

Charles, "perhaps I shall keep him a few days; and, if I like him, and we can agree, I shall not mind buying a horse, as I must have one."

"Then I'm just your man!" exclaimed the landlord, "I've got such a bit of horse-flesh here as you haven't seen this many a day," and going into the stable, he began to expatiate on the various good qualities of the beast, and prepare for "trotting him out."

A regular "deal," in the common course of horse-jockeying, was quite out of the question, for a man flying for his life; but Charles resolved to be as cool as possible, in order to avert suspicion; and contrived to stop the threatened delay, by an expedient usually successful. He took out his purse; and, after ascertaining the price of the horse, put the amount into the landlord's hand, with the understanding that, if he did not like it, he might return it, and purchase at the end of a week, and bro

safe and sound, the money was to be returned, after deducting the hire.

"My friend, Monsieur Le Jonge," said he, "has recommended you, and that's sufficient for me—so, never mind about praising the animal, I shall find out what he is. Come, clap on the saddle; for I've some distance to ride, and shouldn't like to be in the dark."

"Aye, aye," said the landlord, "he'll carry you over the ground fast enough, I'll warrant. And I'll tell you what he'll do beside, if you're fond of hunting, he'll leap like a grasshopper. There he is! see how he carries the saddle! There's a shoulder for you! no need of a crupper there, master! I think the stirrups are about your length—no, I must let 'em out a hole or two."

"Never mind that," said Charles, "I can alter them myself if they're not right."

"Well, then, there he is, all ready," exclaimed the landlord, "but, I'll tell you what, he's apt to pull a bit, when he hasn't had much

exercise; and he hasn't been out of the stable for these three days, so you'd better keep him tight in hand."

Charles sprang into the saddle, and was right glad to perceive that neither whip nor spur appeared necessary. His new purchase scarcely gave him time to mount, and it would be difficult to say which of the two was most eager to be gone.

The landlord stood, chinking the money, and watching his customer, till a turn in the road prevented any further view; and then he returned into the house, and told his wife that he had sold the dark brown runaway horse, that threw Peter and Dick, and pretty near killed poor Racommode the French tailor.

Charles had been gone nearly three hours, ere the arrival of the officers in pursuit of him at the ferry house, "Who'd have thought it!" exclaimed the landlord, "well, I've got my money, that's one comfort. As for overtaking him now, that's all stuff—for I'll be bound to

say he's made the best use of his time—and a pretty start he's got—and he can ride a bit too, I can tell you that, for I watched him, and the brown devil began some of his tricks: but he soon found he'd got his master on his back, and away they went, at a spanking rate, I promise you—so you may as well sit down and make yourselves comfortable, and I'll stand treat, for I don't suppose now, I shall ever see the runaway horse back here again.”

In the meanwhile, Charles continued his journey, every hour with less anxiety, in consequence of the rapid progress he was enabled to make. His road lay through part of the forest of Ardennes, and he passed within a few miles of the castle of St. Antoine, little dreaming how near he was to the object of all his thoughts. At length the heat of the day became oppressive, and his steed showed symptoms of languor, after being ridden far, and frequently allowed to follow its own headstrong propensity for running away, in a manner not quite judicious in

the rider, and which, certainly, he would not have permitted on other occasions. But, the idea of fire and faggot was sufficient to render rapidity of motion extremely pleasant to his feelings; and, with delight, he saw the trees and cottages flying, as it were, behind him. Now, however, he began to reflect that the Rhine was far distant; and that his chance of ultimate safety must depend, entirely, on the powers of his horse, the condition of which, evidently was not at all equal to its spirit. Moreover, a certain feeling within reminded him, that, though a lover and a victim of oppression, he must, nevertheless, submit to the customs of more quiet and ordinary mortals, and look out for a dinner, or rather a breakfast. Fortunately for both man and beast, they reached a place where each could be accommodated, just at a time when accommodation became absolutely necessary.

A small neat house, inhabited by one of the rangers of the forest, who united "the public

line" to his other avocations, presented a most tempting appearance to the weary and thirsty traveller. Charles's steed pricked up his ears at the sight, shook his head, trotted briskly up to the door, and, with a loud neighing, announced his arrival. The door was opened in a second, and the master of the house made his appearance, exclaiming, "I'll be hanged if it isn't the mad captain!"

Charles stared at this extraordinary salute, and the forester begged his pardon, and proceeded to explain that "mad captain" was the name of the horse, which had been born and bred in the forest, and not taken up to be "broke in," till he was five years old, and then, said he, "it was too late, and a precious job we had of it;—but he's a proper good'un to go, I can tell you that. Have you had him long, sir? But wont you alight?"

The latter question was immediately answered in the affirmative; and the rider was shown into a neat small room, which served "for par-

lour, and kitchen, and all," and the "mad captain" went quietly to his old quarters.

A most excellent repast of forest venison, and a refreshing draught of cool "Mozel-wine" soon restored Charles's body to its usual tone; but his mind was still wandering in all directions—he felt much inclined to go to Maestricht in disguise, instead of quitting the country where Isabella was—then he fancied it probable that Monsieur Andelot might have sent her, for security, across the Rhine, and would, doubtless, if he wrote to him from thence, as a particular friend of her father's, send him her address. Besides—if he should be taken—"Yes," he thought, "even for her sake I ought not to run unnecessary risks," and he endeavoured to reason within himself, and weigh coolly all sides of the question: and the result of his meditations was, that, when the landlord, according to immemorial custom, came in, to entertain and edify him with his conversation, he was fast asleep.

"Poor lad!" said the forester, "it will do him good. He isn't much used to riding far, I should guess, by those macaroni boots. They're just like what your Spanish officers wear, strutting about in large towns; a murrain take 'em all, I say! what business have we with a parcel of greedy Dons here, I should like to know? But he's no Spaniard, neither, by his tongue. A proper lad, too! only a little too tall and lanky; but he'll grow out of that, mayhap. Well, he's a good horse-master, however, for he wouldn't touch a bit himself till the captain was fed; and so, as he hasn't finished his flask, I'll just drink his good health, and a good nap and a pleasant journey to man and beast, just for the sake of old acquaintance."

When Charles awoke, the dark length of shadow, stretching from beneath the trees, warned him of declining day; but the moon had already risen, as, though dimly, to await her hour of rule. The "mad captain," invigorated by rest and "good entertainment,"

though not quite so mad as when he started in the morning, proved himself to be endowed with enduring strength as well as speed ; and they journeyed steadily on, through the whole of a clear and cloudless night. Avoiding large towns as much as possible, in two more days the fugitive found himself on the banks of the Rhine, between Cologne and Bonne. He resolved instantly to cross over to the small town of Lulftorf ; but the " captain," who had several times given instances of a desire to have his own way, now positively refused to trust himself in a small boat. So, after he had pushed one huge fellow into the water, and upset two or three more on land, and broken his girths and bridle, his master was obliged to have him sent round, by way of Cologne, to meet him in the opposite town of Duyte, where he would go forward on foot. To the inn in that place the rebellious animal was, in due time, brought and delivered safely to his master ; but the man who had him in charge, was accompanied by another, who lingered

about the yard for some time, and then requested to speak to the owner of the beast. He was, accordingly, shown into Charles's room, where he apologized for his intrusion, in a manner which scarcely accorded with the homeliness of his appearance : his dress consisting of a coarse brown frock-coat, buttoned down before, and covering the rest of his apparel, save a pair of huge, ill-made boots, bearing the marks of a great variety of soil. A large whip in one hand, and a weather-beaten slouched hat in the other, completed the character of a dealing grazier, or a regular chapman in horse-flesh.

" I trust you'll excuse me, sir," said he, " but I'm on the look-out for a lot of such horses as yours ; and, if you feel disposed to sell, I dare say we shall not disagree about price."

" I thank you for the offer," replied Charles, " but I shall have occasion for him yet, as I am about to proceed to Munster."

" Well, sir," said the man, smiling, " that

will make no difference. I will purchase him, if you please, to be delivered in Munster. Do you happen to be acquainted with any body in that town?"

As he was now beyond the reach of his pursuers, Charles felt little concern about the construction that might be put upon his words; and thought this a good opportunity of inquiring after friends, whom it was his intention to join. He, therefore, replied, "I hope there to find a family of the name of Snell."

"I have the pleasure to assure you that they are safely arrived," said the stranger; "that is, all but the son, William; and he was expected daily, when I left, about three weeks since. I presume that I am speaking to a gentleman from the Netherlands?"

Charles told him that he was not mistaken in his surmise, and that the reasons which induced him to quit the country were similar to those of the friends for whom he had inquired.

"As you are so frank and open with me,"

said the seeming horse-dealer, "I will be equally candid with you. We are of the same unfortunate country; but I"—(and he cast a smiling glance at his habiliments)—"I am a military man; and *we* are not inclined to take things quite so coolly as heretofore. We are now recruiting, and I hope, ere long, we shall have an army in the field, that will drive the rascally Spaniards before them like sheep. We have an able and experienced general, and plenty of good officers; and with stout hearts and a good cause, and the people in our favour, nothing can stop us. Let us once reach Brussels, and then it will be all over with the tyrant, and our country will be free and independent."

"May I be allowed to ask who is your commander?" inquired Charles.

"Certainly," replied the major, for that was the rank the speaker had formerly borne; "we have no secrets here now. The Prince of Orange."

"He is, indeed, an able and a good man!" exclaimed Charles.

“ Shall I have your horse now ? ” asked the major : “ my present business here is to mount a few troops well, and this dress enables me to go about to fairs and markets without observation. I think I may take upon me to say, that I know something about the matter, and have got together some good nags ; but, if we could only raise a regiment, mounted as you are, by heavens ! how we should go down upon the Spaniards, and turn ’em over ! What say you ? Shall I have the horse ? ”

“ Both man and horse too ! ” exclaimed the enthusiastic youth, striding across the apartment.

“ Bravo ! ” cried the veteran ; “ I thought it was in you, from the first moment,” and he seized the young man’s hand, and embraced him as though he were his own son. He then proceeded to state that the number of refugees in Germany was so much increased, as to render a movement against the tyrant, Philip, a matter of little risk, now that he was engaged

in a war with France, which, it was well known, required all his means, and left his troops in the Netherlands dissatisfied for want of pay. This was partly true ; but the major's representation was much more in character with his post, as an active and sanguine recruiting-officer, than in accordance with the actual state of affairs. We shall not, therefore, follow him in detail, but rest content with observing, that it was not until peace had been signed between Philip and Henry of France, that the Prince of Orange felt himself justified in making any movement. Enough, however, was said, to convince Charles Randolph that the deliverance of his country was at hand ; and he parted from his new acquaintance with dreams of glory and ambition suitable to his age and inexperience.

Previously to his quitting the Rhine, he addressed a letter to Monsieur Andelot, in which he represented himself as an intimate friend of the late Monsieur Freron, and requested to be informed of the present residence of that gentle-

man's family. The reply was to be directed for him at Munster, to which place he immediately proceeded, and there found the parents of his friend Snell, with the younger branches of their family; but no tidings had reached them of their eldest son, and their apprehensions concerning his fate were of course excessive.

Post after post arrived, and still Charles had no answer to his letter from Monsieur Andelot. At length he wrote again, expressing his anxiety in stronger terms than before, and urging the person he addressed, in the name of his well-known friendship and intimacy with the deceased, not to delay sending the particulars requested. While waiting the result of this second application, he was far from inactive. Strongly impressed with a belief that Isabella must be in Germany, he frequented the public walks, and made excursions into the country, inquiring the names of all who had recently arrived; and their number was so great as to render the task of identifying all the young and

beautiful ladies one of no small difficulty. But the Germans made such strange blunders in Flemish and French names, that, whenever a female bearing that character was announced, nothing but the evidence of his own eyes was sufficient to convince him that she was not really *her* whom he sought; and, consequently, he often found himself in perplexing and ridiculous situations.

At length the wished-for letter from Maes-tricht made its appearance, and he eagerly tore it open and read as follows :

“ If the person signing himself C. R., who wrote two letters from a country where men now generally seek refuge from the consequences of crimes committed in their own, does not wish to involve the innocent, he will cease a correspondence which *cannot*, in any way, be useful to himself. If, however, C. R. should be determined to persevere, his past and future letters will be laid before the constituted autho-

rities, when they cannot fail to be injurious to the parties named therein, *all* of whom are within the jurisdiction of the Netherlands."

" P. S.—C. R. must be aware that his own name is made public, and a reward offered for his apprehension."

As a talent for abusing those who cross us in our purposes is very common, and, moreover, frequently exercised by persons evincing a considerable share of Christian charity on other occasions, the reader will not be surprised to learn that Charles Randolph exclaimed vehemently against his correspondent, whom he denounced as "an unfeeling scoundrel," "a time-serving hypocrite," and sundry other most ungentlemanlike epithets.

But, alas! these ebullitions could not do away with the effects of the letter, which appeared to cut him off from all present hope of finding Isabella.

CHAPTER XI.

CHARLES Randolph's next step, after the mortifying repulse from Monsieur Andelot, was to write to one of his college friends in Holland, who had connections at Maestricht. It was a weary thing, in those days, to wait the arrival of any letter by the post; and the time passed heavily indeed with our lover. He strove to beguile it by the perusal and study of "The Stratagies of War;" and by the active practice of sundry military evolutions, in company with other youthful aspirants about to enter upon their "career of glory."

The spirit of martial enterprise was certainly, "in him," as the horse-dealing major said; but it often seemed overwhelmed and smothered by a deeper feeling. There was a dull sameness

in the "wheelings," and "facings," and "dressings of the line," and drawing and flourishing of swords, for no apparent purpose, save that of making a few bumpkins stare. To be sure, there was a momentary exhilaration in a charge; but then there was no enemy to face—it was children's play—ridiculous—tiresome; and he began to be weary "of all the uses of this world."

In the meanwhile HIS friend had written to *his* friends, and they shifted the inquiry to a third party, notoriously fitted for the execution of such a task. Monsieur Andelot was, it appeared, then gone into Holland, and not expected to return for some weeks; but his old housekeeper stoutly denied his having ever had any lady living in the house, or under his protection, in any way whatever, since the death of his wife, and that event took place some ten years before. For the matter of correspondence she could not answer so positively, being unable to read; but she thought it very unlikely, and was sure he was not guardian to any body's

children, or she must have heard of it; and, besides, the wards would have had some occasion to come to the house.

These particulars were, in due course of time, all transmitted to Charles, in a long closely-written letter, such as the reader has, doubtless, frequently received from youthful friends, but must not expect to be often favoured with in maturer age.

One only chance now remained, and that was to have a personal interview with Monsieur Andelot; and hazardous as the undertaking might appear, it was nothing when compared with the state of intolerable anxiety in which he existed. He, accordingly, wrote to his friend, requesting the earliest intelligence of that gentleman's arrival at Maestricht. In the meanwhile, he made every preparation for the safe execution of his enterprise, and began to pen an extremely long epistle to Isabella, which he trusted to find some means of conveying to her hands, even in the event of his being taken.

To render his path of duty more clear, the winter was now far advanced, and little expectation of being able to commence military movements till late in the spring was entertained by the Prince of Orange and his principal adherents.

Charles's disguise was completed, every necessary information acquired, and his letter to Isabella alone remained unfinished (and that would have been the case if he had been detained longer, as he always thought of something he had forgotten to say), when the welcome news of Monsieur Andelot's return home arrived.

For the last few weeks of suspense, he had practised the country dialect of the electorate of Treves, through which his route lay; and his friend the major, whose quarters were removed to Munster, pronounced him perfect, and furnished him with much local information, relative to the most private inns and secure lodging-houses, where, in the character of a groom going to a new place, he would scarcely be noticed.

This disguise had been selected, because Charles was supposed to be more capable of sustaining it than any other, in consequence of the numerous lectures which his instructor had bestowed upon him, relative to the various "points" about a horse.

Though the days had now begun to lengthen perceptibly, his journey, being undertaken on foot, was long and wearisome; particularly as, to avoid notice, he always took what are called "the nearest ways" from village to village, through fields saturated with moisture, trudging along in a pair of huge hob-nailed shoes, with his "best boots" suspended from a bundle of necessities slung across his shoulder. In this manner, with some few difficulties and hardships, such as losing his way now and then, being compelled to seek shelter in a barn, or under a hayrick for the night, he at length reached Maestricht in safety, and had no difficulty in finding his way to the house indicated by the major. It was an immense building,

sadly out of repair, or more properly speaking going to ruin, and looked like a deserted place. But the abode of the tenant of the only few tenantable rooms was discovered by Charles, according to the directions he had received, up three pair of creaking stairs, along the gallery, and the fourth door on the left, a matter which he was obliged to ascertain, by feeling along the wall with his hands, as daylight was at an end ere he ventured to cross the river in the public ferry-boat.

“Who’s there?” cried a shrill voice from within. “Come in, whoever you are, however!”

Charles accordingly opened the door, which was fastened only by a wooden latch, and discovered an old man and woman sitting near a small fire, over which the latter seemed busily cooking something in a saucepan. There was no other furniture than the two stools they sat on, the fire was composed of a few sticks piled together on the hearth, the walls were bare, and all indicated extreme poverty.

"God speed ye!" said Charles, as he crossed the threshold.

"Aye, aye, I hope he will," cried the woman.

"Amen!" uttered the old man, solemnly, crossing his hands in a peculiar manner, and looking steadfastly toward the fire, to which his guest immediately advanced, and placed his feet across in a similar manner.

"Humph!" said the landlord: "you have friends, I suppose?"

"Yes," replied Charles, "in Germany, all safe and well."

"Thank God!" exclaimed the old man. "Have you anything further to say?"

"Yes," was the reply; "good horses are wanted, and the major sends his best wishes."

"Aye, aye, its all right," said the old man; "I suppose you want a night's lodging?"

"I should be very thankful if you could accommodate me," said Charles; "I shall not trouble you long."

"Tut, tut," muttered the woman, "that's

more than you know ; but come along with me, we mustn't stay chattering here, for the stairs and passages are open to all the world. Come along !" and she rose from her seat, first placing the saucepan upon the ground, and beckoned him to follow her, putting her hand upon her lips, to betoken that silence was necessary.

Following his mute guide, who went forward in the dark and was frequently obliged to give him her hand, and whisper when they had to descend, he threaded an intricate labyrinth of passages, which led to the back part of the mansion.

"Here ! this is your room," she whispered, conducting him into what afterwards appeared a small low chamber, in the Rez de Chaussée, (a space between the ground-floor and the more spacious apartments overhead).

"You will find every thing comfortable ; but you cannot have a light, as no one has an idea that this part of the house is inhabited. There ! the bed is on the right-hand side ; and my

good man will bring you something to eat presently, if you can eat in the dark—if not, you must stop till morning. And so I've no more to say, but good night."

When his hostess was gone, Charles sate himself upon the bed, and began to meditate upon his extraordinary situation, but was soon startled from his musings, not by the *appearance* of his landlord, for nothing was visible, but by his arrival, slip-shod, with the promised refreshment.

"You will find it better than you expect, mayhap," he whispered; "the jug is beer, and the flask is wine, and I thought you might like both after your fatigue. There's some sliced ham and brawn, and bread and cheese, and here's a knife if you want one. There—I shan't ask you any questions, because the least noise is apt to be heard at night; but mind you don't brush any of the dirt or cobwebs off the window in the morning."

Charles expressed his thanks, and strove to slip a piece of money into the old man's hand,

who thrust it back again, saying they would talk of such matters in the morning ; and then, after taking leave, he gently shut the door and departed.

Strong exercise in the open air seldom fails to excite a hearty appetite in the young and healthy ; and our pedestrian did ample justice to the good cheer which he felt before him, and enjoyed his sombre meal exceedingly, though deprived of one of the gourmand's greatest pleasures, that of feasting his eyes as well as his palate. He then threw himself on the bed, and had scarcely time to ascertain that it was by far the best he had found since leaving Munster, when he lost all recollection, till awaking in the morning, he beheld the light of day, dimly shining through the dirt and cobwebs of the small window of his chamber.

It was evident that he had been visited during his slumber, as the remains of his supper were removed, and a substantial breakfast placed in their stead. Nor were the scarcely less neces-

sary comforts of water, and soap, and towels, forgotten; and all, save the dirty cobwebbed window, wore the aspect of extreme neatness, strongly in opposition with the appearance of both his landlord and landlady, and the wretchedness of the apartment in which he had found them.

After he had for some time occupied himself as he thought fit with what he saw around him, his landlord made his appearance, still dressed in the squalid habiliments of the preceding evening, his beard unshorn, and the whole man indicative of abject poverty.

“ You are, I perceive, surprised at what you see,” said he, seating himself in a chair; “ but a short explanation will suffice. This dress is a surer safeguard than the possession of wealth or power. They can have no hope of confiscation from such as me. However, though I am not *quite* what I seem, I would wish you to understand that you are not indebted to me for the comforts which you see around you, and which

will remain at your service as long as circumstances may render your stay necessary; for I have funds placed at my disposal by worthy Christians, who are now obliged to do good by stealth. It will not, I trust, be long thus! The Almighty will not suffer the just and righteous to be always trod under foot by the proud oppressor! Have you any tidings from Germany? I make a rule never to speak on such subjects by night, for eavesdroppers are in every corner; but now we are in perfect safety, as the noises in the streets, by day, prevent sounds from escaping beyond the walls in which they are uttered."

As the reader is acquainted with all that Charles knew of the existing state of things, it will be needless to repeat his communication to the anxious inquirer, who appeared highly gratified by what he heard. The guest then, dismissing public affairs, entered upon his own private business, which he fully explained to his host, omitting only, as usual, the circumstance

of his being the lover of Isabella ; but, whether from something in his manner or appearance at the time, that fact seems seldom to have remained a secret to those whom he addressed.

“ There *must* be some mistake,” said the old man, “ for I am sure there has been no one living with Monsieur Andelot latterly, as I work in his garden generally two or three days every week. You seem surprised, sir—but a deception must be kept up consistently throughout, and the intent of mine, I trust, justifies the means. My custom is, too, to appear hard of hearing, so that many things are said, in my presence, which would not otherwise be spoken ; and, thereby, I have frequently come to the knowledge of circumstances most important to those who have sought refuge here. My wages at Monsieur Andelot’s consist of a meal, which I take in the kitchen, and the merest trifle in money ; and the housekeeper, who is much given to talking, has frequently some of the most notorious gossips in the town about her,

so that I learn a great deal of what is going forward in my visits there. But her master is a very quiet and retired character; and I fear that you will find it difficult, in your present dress, to gain admittance to an interview."

"See him I will!" exclaimed Charles, "let the consequences be what they may."

"Do not be rash, young man," said his host, "and I will see what can be done during the day. We are not without friends here, and the vigilance of the government has served to sharpen their wits. I have known strange things accomplished of late. Remain here quietly till I come back at noon. One thing, however, I should like to know, because sometimes it has been of service to my visitors when they have told me; but do as you like, for the password and sign that you brought from Major Hanlon are quite enough for me. Have you any objections to tell your name?"

"Not the least," was the reply; and it was accordingly given, and repeated twice by the

old man, who forthwith arose and went his way.

The place in which Charles Randolph was then sheltered was admirably fitted for concealment. It was one of three small rooms which had no communication with the principal staircases or galleries of the mansion, save by the circuitous route along which the old woman conducted him, and which terminated in a large apartment, formerly used as a library, where the entrance was concealed by a bookcase, which swung, like a door, on massy concealed hinges, and happened to be open at the time of his arrival, as his hostess was about to take the contents of the saucepan to another of her guests. When this bookcase was swung back against the wall, and two large wooden pins, bearing the appearance of its sole front supporters, were dropped into corresponding holes in the floor, it accorded exactly with the remaining "fittings up" of the library, where the shelves were fastened against the wall, and the

oaken pannels were seen at the back. The whole, with the exception of the wooden pins, which had been very recently added, was probably contrived originally for the residence of the family priest.

Unused to confinement, Charles impatiently counted the hours, as they slowly passed and were announced by the town clocks. Could he but have pen and ink, he thought time would not hang so heavily on his hands, as he might continue his letter to Isabella; and, accordingly, leaving his hobnailed shoes behind, he stole along the passages, and up the stairs, and so on, till he arrived at the barrier just mentioned; and that being firmly closed, prudence forbade him to knock, and he returned much disappointed.

His next device for "killing time" was to walk backward and forward in the long passage immediately adjoining his room, and when he had taken about half a dozen turns, he was somewhat startled at the appearance of his land-

lady, accompanied by a person of genteel deportment, dressed in deep mourning. A momentary apprehension of treachery flashed across his mind, but was quickly dispelled by the approach of the parties.

"This is the good doctor," said his hostess, "come to visit the sick gentleman we have got here in this room." And she put the key into a door which Charles had noticed before, and, from mere curiosity, endeavoured to open, but was, fortunately, unsuccessful in his efforts.

"I shall be happy to have a few words with you presently, after I have seen my patient," whispered the medical man, and immediately entered the invalid's chamber.

In about a quarter of an hour he again made his appearance, and introduced himself to his new acquaintance. "My name," said he, "is Campin, Doctor Campin; and I am, as you may guess by seeing me here, inclined to serve those who are, unhappily, persecuted for a mere difference in religious opinions. I have had an

interview this morning with Eberhart, your landlord, and he has informed me of the business which brought you here. You must excuse my abruptness, but we have no time for ceremony. My profession enables me to enter any house without suspicion, and I come to this ostensibly to visit the good woman who has just left us; but, were I to remain here too long, there would be some danger of discovery. Nothing is more natural than for you to wish to ascertain the residence of your friends; but, I really think, if you believe them to be under the care of Monsieur Andelot, you may make your mind perfectly easy. He is a man of the strictest honour and integrity, and his political and religious opinions have never been called in question. With him the children of the late Monsieur Freron are in comparative safety, even if suspected of a tendency towards their father's opinions, to what they would be if—but, pardon me. Are you aware of your own situation and danger?”

"I am," replied Charles; "there is a reward offered for my apprehension."

"Your name is now one of a long list posted up at the town-hall," continued the doctor. "Now, suppose—independent of the risk you yourself run in the pursuit—suppose you were to discover the place of the orphans' abode, and were to have an interview with them, what could *you* do to serve them? Nothing. But, on the contrary, the very circumstance of your having been seen with them would subject them to the heaviest accusations, from the consequences of which, owing to their unfortunate parentage, and the present extreme severity of the laws, they would scarcely have a chance of escape."

"Fool that I was!" exclaimed Charles. "Indeed—indeed, I fear—Yes, sir, you are right. You view things coolly and as they are; while I—but, what must I do? I cannot, will not return till I *know* that she is in safety. Let me but ascertain *that*, and I will devote myself,

soul and body, to the great cause, till our country shall be rescued."

"I know Monsieur Andelot," observed Doctor Campin, "I will speak to him in private on the subject. You shall have the result about this hour to-morrow."

As he said these words, the good woman of the house entered, and told him that his patient was fretting himself because he had not asked after his dog that morning.

"Oh," replied the doctor, smiling, "tell him the dog is in excellent health, and I hope soon to be able to say the same of his master."

The old woman then left the room to convey the welcome tidings, and the doctor continued. "My poor patient has had a narrow, almost a miraculous escape. I thought, at one time, that his recovery was impossible. He was for a long while delirious, and we were obliged to take away a great dog which he brought with him, for fear of discovery, as the creature seemed to apprehend his master's danger, and would howl

most piteously. I have it now in my keeping, and the patient seldom omits asking after him every morning."

"What kind of a dog is it?" asked Charles, eagerly, though scarcely daring to hope what he yet felt was possible.

"A very large black dog," replied the doctor; "I hardly know what breed to call him. His name is Fido."

"Fido!" exclaimed Charles; "it must be the same! and your patient is William Snell?"

"Then Heaven be praised!" cried the worthy physician, while his eyes glistened with joy; "my poor patient has found a friend! and just at the time when he needs one; for though he may be fit to travel in a day or two, he ought not to go alone. But you shall see him presently. Let me go in first to prepare him for the interview, for he is yet very weak, and sudden emotions must be avoided."

The gradual announcement of a friend's presence was made to the invalid as judiciously as

the time would admit. He was first told that there was a fellow-lodger in the house, under similar circumstances with himself. At that he was not surprised. Then the doctor expressed an opinion, that in his present state of convalescence, society might be serviceable to him ; and the suggestion was received with delight, by one who had lain on a lonely bed of sickness and suffering for months. A hint was next thrown out that they might probably know something of each other's families—or even have met casually in society, and so by degrees the whole truth was disclosed.

“Do not be surprised,” said the doctor to Charles, when about to depart, “if you do not see me to-morrow at this hour. This has been a somewhat longer visit than we medical men usually pay to a poor woman ; and we must not run unnecessary risks. Be careful not to let your friend over-fatigue himself by talking, to which he has been so long unaccustomed ; and apparently scarcely less gratified than the

two friends with the events of the morning, he went his way, accompanied by the old woman.

Charles was at first shocked at the altered appearance of his college associate, and scarcely ventured to ask him any questions relative to the cause of his illness ; but Snell had a tale to tell which soon rivetted the attention of his auditor, who sate listening and "drinking in his words with eager ear," till the poor patient was fairly exhausted ; and then his friend remembered the counsel of the doctor, and requested that the rest of the narrative might be postponed till the afternoon. Doubtless, this request was the result of proper feeling ; but still there was no great display of self-denial in the case, as it was not made till after the invalid had told all he knew about Isabella, and described his last taking leave of her, previous to his escape from the castle.

In their next interview Snell related the particulars of the attack committed upon him by Van Laret, after which he recollected nothing

till he found himself extended on the ground, with Fido standing over him.

"I think," he continued, "that I must have fainted again, perhaps more than once, for I scarcely recollect any thing, except putting a handkerchief about my head, which I fancied was still bleeding. How the night passed I know not—but, in the morning, the light gleamed upon the river, and I felt parched with a burning thirst, which impelled me forward, (in what manner I cannot tell, as I remember striving in vain to stand upright,) till I came to the water's edge. A boat, with several persons in it, was coming down the stream, and rapidly approaching the place where I lay, but they did not appear to observe me, though I waved my hand, and strove in vain to call out. Fido, however, understood my motions, and attracted their attention first by barking, and then by plunging into the water and swimming back to me. There seemed to be some little hesitation on board, and I feared at one time they would

have passed on and left me to my fate ; but the feelings of humanity and my wretched appearance, as they drew nearer, prevailed, and they made for the bank.

“ A little water which one of them gave me, enabled me just to say that my life depended upon their taking me with them. I was then lifted into the boat, and being placed along the bottom, received every attention that it was in their power to bestow ; but I know little of the particulars of our voyage, having remained in nearly an insensible state all the way. I have learnt since, that my deliverers were persons in the same situation as myself, making their way out of the country, and that they incurred great risk in bringing me ashore to this house, where I have been treated with a degree of kindness which could not have been exceeded had it been the abode of my own parents.”

Charles then related the occurrences which had befallen him since their last separation, and his friend trembled at the danger to which he

had exposed himself, by coming where his name was in the list of the proscribed.

"My own case," said he, "is very different; as I understand from inquiries, made through Dr. Campin's means at Liege, that my arrest has never been acknowledged by any of the courts; and seems to have been a mere arbitrary stretch of power, in order to induce my parents to remain in the country. My principal anxiety is, therefore, on their account, to relieve them from suspense, since it seems that they have not received either of the two letters which I wrote to them from hence. That seems very extraordinary."

They were neither of them then aware that the custom of examining letters was extended to those addressed to refugees abroad, as well as to suspected persons within the country; and the intelligence of a son's welfare was considered of too gratifying a description to be allowed to pass forward to a heretic, by some of the vilest of the Duke of Alva's agents, one of whom was

unfortunately then in office at Maestricht. Monsieur Andelot had, with his usual caution, sent his anonymous epistle forward by a private hand to Cologne; and Charles's other letters came from Holland, by a route where Philip and his councils already stood on a very different footing to that which they still, unhappily, retained in the more southern provinces.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Doctor Campin called, on the following day, he related some curious particulars of a conversation which had taken place between him and Monsieur Andelot, in which the leading feature of that gentleman's character was displayed in a striking manner. He said that he had been applied to several times before, respecting the orphans of the late Monsieur Freron—acknowledged that he certainly had, formerly, been acquainted with that individual—but it was many years since, and *long* before he was suspected to be a reformist—he thought it extremely hard that, because he had *once* known a man, he should be expected to give an account of his family to the third and fourth generation; as for the children, most likely they would

tread in the steps of their father, and then he would take good care they should never darken his doors.

“ But,” continued the worthy doctor, “ I observed that he never positively denied that the orphans were under his care; and perhaps I ought to have been satisfied, under existing circumstances, with such negative evidence; but from your extreme anxiety, I ventured to affirm that I had been consulted by a gentleman now under my care, who, in case of his decease, had an intention of leaving some property to one of the children, and wished to know into whose hands it was likely to fall, as they were all under age. I hope, sir,” said the doctor, looking archly at Charles, “ that I did not go too far in making this assertion?”

“ Not at all,” was the reply, “ and I’ll set about my will immediately. It is a duty that I have too long neglected; and, in these times, when one knows not what may happen every hour—but I interrupt you, sir.”

“To conclude,” continued the doctor, “when I talked of money, he said *that* altered the case entirely ; and if my patient had really an intention of bequeathing any thing to the family, why, then, in consideration of his old acquaintance with the father, they should not lose it for want of a trustee, and suggested that the task would be more agreeable if I would consent to join him in the office ; and as I had no objection to that, he at last told me that he had taken every precaution for the safety and comfort of the poor orphans, who now resided in a retired situation, with which they seemed to be perfectly contented, and were all in good health three days since.”

“Did he furnish you with any particulars of their residence ?” inquired the lover.

“He did not tell me the name of the place,” replied Doctor Campin ; “but he said they were under the roof of an elderly respectable veteran officer, whom he had known many years ; but that they lived apart, and had every

accommodation and means of enjoyment that the country afforded, with horses and servants at their command."

"Then they are still there," observed Snell.

"Respectable veteran!" muttered Charles. "They are in the hands of a murderer, sir—a base, cowardly assassin!"

"Isabella Freron," said the patient, "is the young lady of whom I have so often talked to you. She little dreams the real character of the man under whose roof she lodges."

"And it would be cruel to inform her, till she is removed from thence," said the doctor. "I have often reflected on her situation without knowing who she was. Her brother and a little girl, you say, are with her; and the love of money, which induced the villain to attack you, will lead him to do all in his power to retain them as long as he is handsomely paid. You know I have always been of opinion, from the circumstance of his taking a thing of apparently such trifling value as your belt, and leaving

your pockets unrifled, that he must have overheard your interviews with the young lady; and I moreover think that, had you not, unfortunately, recognized him, he would have been content to rob you in disguise without attempting murder. That unlucky exclamation of yours, showed him that his life and character, and all that he had been striving for through life, were at stake, and made him desperate. I certainly do not think that the lady should remain under his roof; and am sure Monsieur Andelot will remove her, as soon as he shall be informed of the circumstances; but, in the meanwhile, she ought to be kept in ignorance."

The idea of Isabella remaining a day longer in the castle was most revolting to Charles Randolph; and nothing but the strong light in which the doctor represented the probability of involving her and her brother in his own fate, could have prevented him from hastening immediately to her rescue. But reflection told him the counsel was good; and he endeavoured to be content with the welcome intelligence of

her welfare, and the knowledge of her place of abode, which, from his friend's description, he endeavoured to trace in his mind. And, in such ideal fancies he found himself much happier than he had been for months; and would muse by the hour, imagining that she might be then riding in the forest with her brother and little Elinor—then, that she was sitting, pensively, thinking of him—and so would love, in idea, to trace her absent footsteps from morn to night, according to the custom of true and faithful lovers from time immemorial.

A fresh cause of alarm, however, soon suggested itself. "What if Monsieur Andelot, in consequence of the doctor's representation, should remove her to another retreat? Then," thought he, "she will be again lost to me." And he began to feel almost as anxious for her continued residence at the castle, as he had previously been for her removal; as, at all events, it appeared to be a safe place during those turbulent times.

He had certain waking dreams likewise, at this period, in which he fancied himself at the head of a troop or regiment, attacking and entering the said castle, and bearing away his Isabella, not as a refugee, but openly in broad daylight, with "all the honours of war." But such dreams and fancies, however amusing they may be to a lover, cannot be very interesting to the reader; and therefore we shall proceed to state his plans of action.

In the course of a week, Snell was pronounced capable of undertaking a journey; and it was agreed that he should travel as an invalid, who, on that account, was compelled to take a servant with him, and Charles of course accepted the place. Neither master nor man were to appear as if they belonged to the high and mighty classes of the earth; but, as though, in order to save the expences at large inns, they were to take the route by which the latter had recently arrived from Germany. As there was no pursuit after Snell, he had little cause

of apprehension, even if his appearance had not been totally altered by long illness and confinement, and Charles was exactly such a young man as one in his situation would have hired for the journey, being strong and active, able to lift his poor master on and off his horse, and moreover, without the pert and self-important air and manners of a town-servant. He seemed a decent, well-behaved, country lad, who knew little about "indoor work," but wished to "make himself useful," and who, though he hoped to get a better place some day, was content to take what offered for the present. Besides all this, and his knowledge of the country, his friend, the horse-dealing major, had insisted on the necessity of every man's knowing how to govern his own horse, no matter what his rank might be, before he was fit to enter upon active service. And he would tell many striking instances of the fatal effects of ignorance in that art, which he had witnessed in the course of his experience. "If you don't

do your duty to your horse, you can't expect him to do his duty for you," was a favourite saying often on his lips; "and, as for depending on a servant in war time, he may be shot at any hour, and then next morning you find your horse has spent the night supperless, with yesterday's coat of dirt about him—then comes a cough and cold, and you're dismounted, or perhaps fall into the hands of the enemy."

Charles's purse was, of course, at his master's disposal, but Doctor Campin steadfastly refused to accept any payment on account of his long continued attendance. "I can do without it," said the good man, "and you know not what you may want before your journey is ended. In happier times, which I trust we shall all live to see, I promise to accept payment as a professional man, for I conceive no one has a right to compel another to endure what he may consider an obligation, when it may be so easily cancelled. Therefore, consider yourself my debtor if you will, and be assured that I can

afford to trust you without inconvenience to myself."

They were, however, permitted to give something toward the fund for supporting their place of refuge; but old Eberhart positively refused to receive any money on his own account, and earnestly besought them not to offer any to his wife.

"We have everything we want," said he, "and dare not spend money if we had it; and last time a gentleman gave her some, old as she is, she must needs go and cheapen a tawdry necklace, and *did* buy a new petticoat. However, as you're going to *ride* now, if you don't want those nailed shoes, they would be serviceable to me in wet weather, and will do to recal you both to my recollection."

Two strong and useful hacks had already been purchased for the occasion, at a small village on the opposite banks of the Meuse; and early one morning, according to appointment, master and man arrived, in a small

boat, to take possession and commence their journey.

"Your master seems in a poor plight for travelling," said the landlord of the little inn, where the nags had been stationed, to Charles.

"Why, yes," was the reply; "I expect I shall have a job with him — but I'll do what I can."

"That's a good lad!" said mine host; "come, take a drop of something this cold morning—it will do you good."

This civil offer was declined, because drinking early was apt to affect his head, and he must look well after his master.

"That's a nice young chap," said the landlord, as soon as they were gone, to some of his "schaups" (drinking customers); "it's a lucky thing for his poor master that he's got such a one to look after him."

"Aye, I remember noticing him t'other day, when he went through here to go to his new place," observed a bystander.

"Humph!" said another, "and a pretty place he's got of it. I should think it won't last long."

"Why, no," quoth the first, "the poor gentleman doesn't seem long for this world; but them are not the worst of masters to serve, let me tell you; for sometimes, you see, when they find they're a going, they set a proper value on what's done for 'em; and a good servant runs a chance of a legacy, instead of toiling and starving for years till a body's worn out, and then being turned off, just as the maggot bites, for nothing at all may be."

"Well," said the landlord, "if he comes this way again, I'll do what I can to help him to a place, if they don't take him for a dragoon, for that's just what he's made for, after all. Did you mind how he mounted?"

"Oh, bless you!" cried the other, "he's a regular groom. I'd some talk with him t'other day, and he knows a pretty deal about horses, I promise ye."

Whatever Charles might have known of such matters, it happened, luckily for him, that the shaggy beasts, then under his care, were perfect strangers to the ceremonies of grooming; but they were strong and steady, and had never been so well off in their lives, having plenty of food and but little work, as Snell's weakness compelled the travellers to advance by easy stages.

It was well for the two friends that they were together, as persons going to Germany were subjected to constant inquiries, seldom addressed to those journeying inward toward the centre of the country. On more than one occasion, a medical man was called in, to ascertain whether the illness of the master was real or counterfeit, and sometimes those gentlemen wished to detain him, with an assurance that his life would be endangered by continuing to pursue his journey. His reply usually was, that a long illness had completely drained his finances, and

that he was anxious to arrive on the banks of the Rhine as soon as possible, in order to find a cheap conveyance by water towards Baden, where he had been ordered to go for the recovery of his strength. During such scrutinies, Charles generally contrived to be extremely busy in the stables, and failed not to recal to the memory of his landlords and landladies that he had passed through, some time since, to go to his place, which, in accordance with what was passing in his friend's room, he described as being but a very sorry one, as his master was very poor, though a good sort of man enough, too; "but," he continued, "I don't think he'll want me much when we get to Baden, as he talks of selling the horses; and as there's always, I'm told, a number of great people there, I hope I shall be able to get into something better."

Little loss of time was, however, caused by these inquisitions, as few medical advisers seemed desirous of having a poor patient, and he was

recommended to "try a stage or two more, and *then* lay by," if he found his strength fail him.

But, notwithstanding habitual caution, men unaccustomed to practise deceit are liable to forget some point necessary for their disguise, and, one day, Charles had the imprudence to wash his hands before sitting down to his homely meal with a party of countrymen. This was noticed by a sturdy-looking blacksmith, who observed with a sneer, "Why, one would take you for a lady's maid, instead of a groom, by the look of your hands."

The colour mounted into Charles's face at the recollection of the imprudence he had been guilty of, and the smith continued, by observing that he blushed like a young girl too. It appeared now time to speak, and the groom said, that whatever the colour of his hands might be, he knew how to use them, and would'nt put up with insolence from any fellow. High words, of course, ensued, and, as the offender

was champion of the village, at cudgel-playing and wrestling, and throwing the sledge hammer, the landlady thought proper to interfere, and told Charles he had better be quiet, for he didn't know who he was talking to; and told the blacksmith that he ought to be ashamed of himself for picking a quarrel with a lad who, he must know, was no match for him. But the spectators, who thought the groom had exhibited too much of the gentleman's gentleman, were for "seeing it out fairly," either at wrestling or cudgels.

There was now no retreating, and Charles accepted a challenge to a bout at the latter, directly he had fed his horses; and, during that occupation, contrived to soil his offending members again, that they might not attract the attention of any new comers, a very proper precaution where every trifle was sufficient to excite suspicion. He then proceeded to the scene of action on the village green, and found the blacksmith a very formidable opponent, for he

was stout made, strong and active; and although Charles had the advantage in height, and called in aid all the science which he had picked up while at college, and from the more recent instructions of the major, they rattled their sticks without doing any execution, amid the applauses of the gaping rustics, till the "umpire" called upon them to "hold," and declared it was "a drawn bout."

The blacksmith, who had felt much doubt respecting the fate of his laurels, and, moreover, was a good-tempered "fellow at bottom," was by no means sorry for this intervention, and now thought fit to hold out the olive branch, by saying, "Well, I'll never trust to looks again! Hang me, if ever I stood up to a better chap. So there's my hand, my hearty."

The conflict would immediately have terminated, but for the spectators, who had now greatly increased in number, and began to murmur. "What! our Phil, cry out first? Well, I never could have believed *that*!

What'll the Elsen people say, I wonder?" and other taunting speeches, which the champion could not bear. So, it was agreed that they should have "another bout, just to see who was best man." This lasted not quite so long as the former, for Charles, having now no spleen against his adversary, contented himself with acting on the defensive, till he should have an opportunity of disarming him, which he at length effected by a dexterous sleight, for which he was indebted to the major, and sent the blacksmith's weapon whirling over the heads of the crowd. He then quietly placed his own beneath his arm, and was cheered loudly in his way back to the Sun, whither his antagonist accompanied him, to drink to their better acquaintance. Charles then accounted for the sin of having whitish hands, by saying he was obliged, by his master's order, to ride in gloves; and besides that, to wash them sometimes two or three times a-day, when he attended him in his room.

“When he gets better,” he continued, “I hope he won’t be so particular.”

“No, no, he won’t mind such cursed nonsense then, I dare say,” observed the smith; “but sick folks will have their whims. Well, I shall be always glad to see you, when you come this way. You’ll remember Phil, the smith, of Desmond; every body knows me here-about.”

Charles promised to remember, and soon after received a summons to attend his master, and the two new acquaintances separated.

As this event was too likely to draw company to the inn in the evening, the travellers resolved, contrary to their original intention, to proceed forward another stage. And they learnt afterward, that the “white-handed groom” was, for some time, a subject of conversation; and became, at last, an object of suspicion in the neighbourhood, where his dexterity with the cudgels, and consequently with the sword, was described as miraculous. The result was a

belief that he must be an officer escaping in disguise, and search was made after him accordingly, when it was too late.

The view of a noble river seldom fails to excite emotion in the human breast. A broad and deep expanse of waters, moving for ever onward, changing its substance and identity every moment, yet retaining its form and destination, while ages roll by, like its passing waves, and the firm and solid earth undergoes a thousand vicissitudes—such is the Rhine. Empires have crumbled away—the wild barbarian has been succeeded by the tame slave of tyranny—the subservient minion—and the unshrinking patriot. The conquerors of the world established colonies, and built towns, and towers, and pleasant houses upon the banks, the remains of which serve but to guide the antiquarian in his conjectures respecting their probable names and uses. Even languages have passed away, unknown and forgotten. Yet, still as ever, glides along the living barrier, dividing man from

man, and kingdom from kingdom, as though commissioned to mark the boundaries of ambition by Him, who formed the mighty hills from whence its source is derived.

With such reflections, our poor invalid gazed upon the welcome sight. Long confinement on a bed of sickness and solitude had chastened the ardour of his spirit, and he panted for a place of rest, security, and peace. But it was far different with his companion, who looked upon the river before him, not merely as the termination of his present wearisome and anxious journey, but as the commencement of a future and more glorious career. Over those waters he should soon be borne again, returning, not as a menial and a refugee, but in the proud character of a deliverer and avenger of his country. One was as the hart "panting for the watersprings;" the other like the war-horse, that "smelleth the battle from afar off." And whence arose the difference?—for their characters had appeared very similar in bygone days. Alas!

we talk often of our principles of action, when a closer investigation might show us that we are guided by our feelings and the influence of circumstances. Snell was weak in body, incapable of exertion, and about to enjoy repose quietly in the bosom of his family, a little circle, which included all that he held most dear. Beyond their welfare, he had scarcely a wish, save those which arose from the glow of friendship towards his companion, and the feelings of general philanthropy.

Charles Randolph, on the contrary, was in full possession of health and strength ; and instead of a bed of sickness, had passed the last few months in a series of military exercises, which he consented to undergo, merely because they were a necessary prelude to some great achievement. Still, in this particular, he had hitherto been merely on a par with the generality of his companions, who were all anxious "to distinguish" themselves ; now, however, he had an additional cause, a soul-engrossing cause, which none but

himself might share. The castle of St. Antoine, and one that dwelt therein, were before the eyes of his imagination day and night, and his soul burned within him, like that of the lion deprived of his mate. Something likewise might, at the present moment, be allowed for reaction, when his proud spirit was relieved from the necessity of counterfeiting the manners of a menial servant, associating with the vulgar, and patiently enduring contempt and insult from the underlings of the oppressor, "drest in a little brief authority."

Such were the friends, when, after a long and vexatious examination, they were permitted to cross the Rhine, and found themselves in a country of comparative freedom. As they advanced, parties of soldiers appeared marching in various directions. It was evident some important movement was in agitation, but they could obtain no satisfactory intelligence till they reached Munster, where Snell found his

delighted parents, and Charles was warmly welcomed by the major, now in all his glory.

"Nobody has mounted your horse but myself, ever since you've been gone," exclaimed the enthusiast, "and there isn't a completer charger now in the regiment. No, nor one to equal him. I've capital news for you; I've spoken to the prince and got you a troop! what think you of that, my lad?"

"I feel truly grateful," replied Charles, his eyes glistening with joy; "and, by God's blessing, I hope to convince the prince that his confidence is not unworthily bestowed."

"He knows that already," said Major Heulen; "for he has often heard his son, the Count of Buren, speak of you."

"We were together in college at Louvain," observed the newly made captain.

"I know it," said the major; "but that is a sad story. Have you heard the particulars?"

Charles replied in the negative.

“He has been seized, by the orders of the Duke of Alva,” continued the major, “and sent as a prisoner to Spain,* notwithstanding the impossibility of bringing any charges against him, and the privileges of the place. But privileges, and rights, and laws, are quite out of the question now. The villain has declared all the prince’s estates forfeited to the king, and so there’s nothing now left for it but coming to blows at once. I expect orders to march every day. The people are sure to rise and join us; for what mercy can they hope for from a wretch who has poisoned his own son, merely because he expressed compassion for their sufferings?”†

* He was detained in that country, a prisoner, for thirty years.

† Don Carlos, the son of Philip, had “not scrupled, on different occasions, to censure the measures of his father’s government, and particularly those which had been adopted in the Netherlands.” “He was suspected of holding secret interviews with the Marquis of Mons and the Baron de Montigny, and to have formed the design of retiring into the Netherlands, to put himself at the head of the malcontents. Of this design, intelligence was carried by some of the

In a few days after his promotion, Charles Randolph moved southward with his regiment,

courtiers to the king, who, having consulted with some of the inquisitors at Madrid, as he usually did in matters of great importance and difficulty, resolved to prevent the prince from putting his design in execution, by depriving him of his liberty. For this purpose he went into his chamber in the middle of the night, attended by some of his privy counsellors and guards; and, after reproaching him with his undutiful behaviour, told him that he had come to exercise his paternal correction and chastisement. Then, having dismissed all his attendants, he commanded him to be clothed in a dark coloured mourning dress, and appointed guards to watch over him, and to confine him to his chamber. The high-spirited young prince was extremely shocked at such unworthy treatment, and prayed his father and his attendants to put an immediate end to his life. He threw himself into the fire, and would have destroyed himself, had he not been prevented by the guards. During his confinement, his despair and anguish rose to a degree of frenzy." "Several princes interceded for his release, as did many of the principal Spanish nobles. But his father was relentless and inexorable. After six months' imprisonment, he caused the inquisition to pass sentence against his son, and, under the cover of that sentence, ordered poison to be given to him, which, in a few hours, put a period to his miserable existence, at the age of twenty-three."—*Life of Philip the Second*. Some authors attribute Philip's conduct to jealousy of his Queen Elizabeth (daughter of Henry II. of France), whom he had asked to be

to join the army of the Prince of Orange, which was composed of Flemish exiles, Wurtemburgers, Hessians, and others, collected from all parts of Germany. Their numbers continued to increase, from levies made in Cleves, Juliers, and other places adjoining to Brabant; and, in the meanwhile, the prince's brother, Count Lewis, was actively engaged in raising other forces in the northern districts. Contributions were received from the refugees in England, Embden, and other places, and the prince himself sold all his jewels, plate, and furniture, in order to provide for the expenses of the war, and his example was followed by many of his adherents. His brother, Don John, as well as the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Wurtemberg, the Landgrave of Hesse, and

the wife of his son, before he himself was a widower. The circumstances attending the sudden death of this princess, some time after that of Don Carlos, were such as to "throw, at least, violent suspicions upon Philip of having immolated a second victim to his fury."—*Works of the Abbé de St. Real.*

several other princes, likewise furnished him with considerable sums, besides the assistance previously afforded him in levying troops within their respective territories.

From these various sources, an army of about twenty thousand men, including horse and foot, was ultimately collected. But as that of the Duke of Alva was equal in number, and much better furnished with stores and provisions, as well as more practised in active service, the prince appears to have placed his chief reliance on the anticipated insurrection in his favour, whereby some of the principal cities would be induced to throw open their gates to receive him.

* "The pressing invitations which he received from many of the principal inhabitants of the Netherlands, and the repeated representations which were made to him of the universal hatred with which the people were animated against the governor," were sufficient to justify him in this expectation.

* Watson's "History of the Reign of Philip the Second."

*“ Before leaving Germany, he published a manifesto, in which he explained the motives which induced him to have recourse to arms.”

“ And likewise thought proper to make it known that he had changed his sentiments in religion ; and was now convinced that the opinions of the Protestants were more conformable than those of the Romish Church to the great rule of Christian faith, the sacred writings.”

* Watson’s “ History of the reign of Philip the Second.”

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